Advent Testimony Addresses

Queen's Hall Meetings

DECEMBER 13, 1917.

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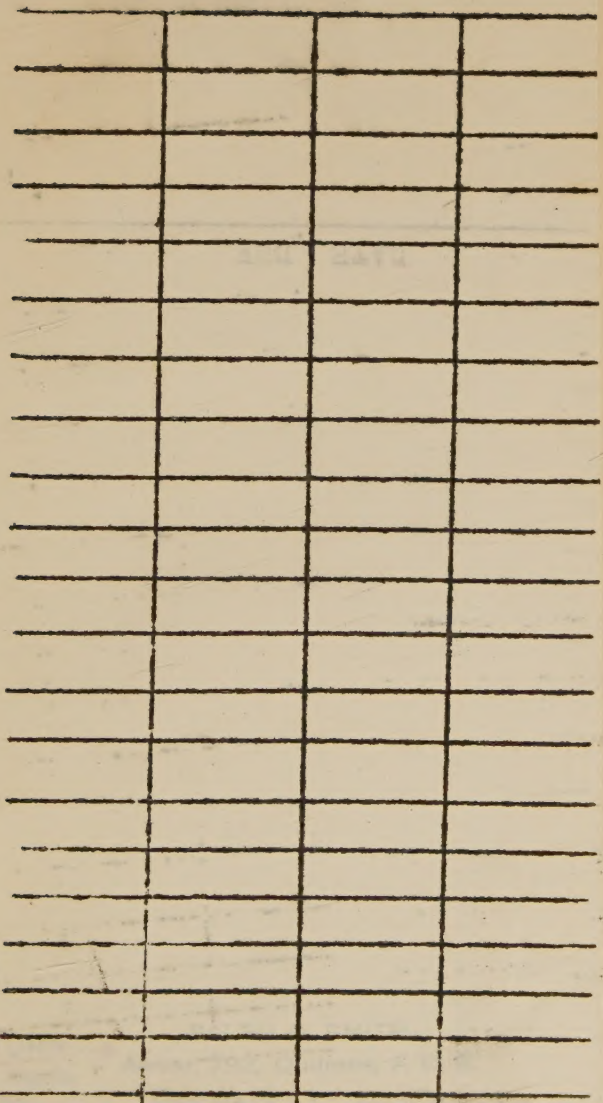

ADVENT TESTIMONY

ADDRESSES

Advent Testimony Statement and Syllabus.

(Issued on Thursday, Nov. 8th, 1917).

"OCCUPY TILL I COME."

1. That the present Crisis points towards the close of the Times of the Gentiles.
2. That the Revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment when He will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples on the evening of His Resurrection.
3. That the completed Church will be translated to be "for ever with the Lord."
4. That Israel will be restored to its own land in unbelief, and be afterwards converted by the Appearance of Christ on its behalf.
5. That all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the Second Coming of the Lord, because all nations will then be subject to His rule.
6. That, under the reign of Christ, there will be a further great effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh.
7. That the truths embodied in this statement are of the utmost practical value in determining Christian character and action with reference to the pressing problems of the hour.

N.B.—This is a general statement, which does not profess to decide on particular details of prophetic interpretation

Advent Testimony Addresses

Delivered at the

MEETINGS AT QUEEN'S HALL,

LONDON, W.C.,

December 13th, 1917,

BY THE

Rev. A. C. Dixon, D.D. Prebendary H. E. Fox, M.A.
Pastor W. Fuller Gooch Rev. J. Stuart Holden, D.D.
Rev. E. L. Langston, M.A. Rev. F. B. Meyer, D.D.
Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D.D.
A. T. Schofield, M.D. Preb. H. W. Webb-Peploe, M.A.
Preb. F. S. Webster, M.A. Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, M.A.

AUTHORISED REPORT.

LONDON:
CHAS. J. THYNNE,
Whitefriars Street, London, E.C. 4.

January, 1918.

FORE-WORD.

These addresses were delivered to crowded audiences, on whom the consciousness of the Divine presence rested in remarkable power.

They are the utterances of a group of men, connected with various branches of the Church of Christ, and differing in their views on subsidiary matters of prophetic interpretation.

No attempt is made to determine "the day or the hour," or intrude on the secret things which belong only to God. Their supreme purpose is to arouse Christian people to consider the signs of the times in the light of our Lord's own words, and of the sublime forecasts of the future uttered by prophets and seers, beneath the impulse and inspiration of the Spirit of Christ.

It is the earnest hope of the promoters of these gatherings, and of others—arranged for the third Thursday mornings of January, February, March and April of the present year, in the Cannon Street Hotel—that the widening influence of this testimony may spread, leading to private gatherings of earnest students, not for disputation on debateable points, but for the constructive study of the great prophecies of Scripture, and to the witness of the Church to the blessed hope, until the day dawn and the day-star arise on our hearts.

With the desire that the Church, when summoned to meet her Lord may not be taken unawares, and with the profound conviction that the only hope of the world's permanent peace and blessedness lies in the setting-up of His everlasting Kingdom, this booklet is issued to perpetuate and direct the movement which gave it birth.

New Year's Day, 1918.

In addition to those whose Addresses are set out on these pages, Revs. Alfred Bird, J. S. Harrison, and Dr. A. H. Burton took part in the meetings, and are associated in this Testimony.

N.B.—Copies of the original Manifesto with signatures attached, and other particulars, can be obtained from "Advent-Testimony," c/o Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E. 1, A stamped envelope should be enclosed.

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Advent Testimony Addresses.

QUEEN'S HALL, LONDON,
Thursday Morning, December 13th, 1917.

The Rev. Preb. H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE, M.A. (Presiding) :

Fellow-members of the Body and, I trust, of the Bride of Christ:—It is indeed a matter for rejoicing to realise that so many as are now gathered here before God are interested in the special subject now to be considered, and to think with holy hope and expectation that the Lord Jesus Christ may soon be among us, taking to Himself His Bride to be for ever with Him as her Lord, and that then, in the mercy and goodness of God, any that are really ready to welcome the Lord Jesus as their Bridegroom and their Master shall be "like Him," because they "shall see Him as He is."

Our One Great, Ceaseless Hope.

This is the one great hope in which, I trust, everyone of us is now taking part in this Advent Movement. Once let the question of our own salvation be settled in such a way

that we can speak with holy confidence to God as our Father in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, and speak of the Saviour as our true Redeemer, Master, Friend, Keeper and Lord, and speak of the Holy Ghost as our true Comforter and Guide; then there is no one question, no one subject, no one thought, no one prospect or hope that can be so all-engaging and so all-satisfying to the soul as the thought which has brought us together now, viz., that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to take unto Himself His own as His Bride, and it becomes all that "name the Name of Christ," not only "to depart from iniquity," but to be so ready to greet their Lord that the one ceaseless hope and desire of their souls is this: "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly."

It is an astounding fact, and would be incomprehensible, I think, were it not for the stubbornness of human nature under the power of Satan, that there have been in all my lifetime, at least, so very many who profess and call themselves by the Name of Christ, but yet never think practically, or with earnestness, of the fact that men are to expect the Lord Jesus Christ to return in the flesh, even according to the solemn words of the Angel recorded in Acts i. 11: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye

have seen Him go into heaven." How any human being who professes to accept the Bible as a revelation from God Almighty can question the fact that the Lord is to return in human form, and to take His own to Himself that they may reign with Him in this world; or how there can be any who question whether the details of that fact and the surrounding circumstances put before us in God's Word are to be studied, to be thought over, and to be accepted in every possible way that the Holy Ghost will enable us to apprehend them, one cannot understand. During a lifetime like my own I have known very few either of our own beloved Church or of the other Churches round about us, and so welcomed now as our brethren in Christ, who have really given themselves to the study of this subject, and who have come to a definite, solemn conclusion as to the things detailed in God's Book concerning it.

The Bible as the Word of God.

We are here this morning—all of us, I hope—to affirm that we accept this blessed Book as the Word of God, from Gen. i. to Rev. xxii., and to affirm, that being a fact, that Almighty God, the God, the Fountain Head of creation, the God of wisdom and of knowledge and of everlasting glory, has Himself made this revelation to the children of men;

and that He who came to be "God manifest in the flesh" has definitely said to all of us, in St. John v. 39, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." How anybody who can study this Book and say it comes from God can ever have neglected this solemn subject, and not have desired, first, to speak of it, and, secondly, to look for the events that are foretold, I cannot apprehend. From my soul, after having had the privilege of sixty or more years' study of the Bible, owing to the fact of being blessed with parents who thought it their delight to await the coming of the Lord, I can say here with humble gratitude that I have never been allowed to neglect or lay this subject aside, but have taken it, after my own salvation was secured, as the one hope, the joy of one's heart, the great prospect that lies before us, to be perpetually looking up and saying, "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly," and to hear Him saying, in reply, "Awake, watch, be ready; for ye know not in what hour the Son of Man shall come." Let any man study the Saviour's words, "Watch, and be ready," and then ask himself, "For what?" Here is the answer: For the return of the Lord as the King of Glory, and as the Husband or Bridegroom of His beloved Church. Let any man study these things and then look up and say, "What does it mean for me?" The answer

is clear: "Be ye holy, for I am holy; and be ye also ready at any moment, to rise and meet your Lord when He comes for His Bride."

Those who have framed our syllabus have wisely, I think, in many ways given us separate headings as subjects for definite consideration, not only for this public gathering, but for private pondering as well, and for after-prayer and after-discussion, and for after-reception and action, if you find them to be according to God's Holy Word. This morning we are called to consider the first three heads given to us in this syllabus. Very definite indeed are the statements made in them, one by one; and I ask, as chairman, that our brethren who speak will endeavour to keep to the points to which their special attention is called, and that we, looking together, in a prayerful spirit, into the first three of these heads this morning, may realise

(1) That the times of the Gentiles may indeed be considered to be now fulfilled;

(2) That our Lord's coming may be expected humbly, hopefully, and earnestly at any moment; and

(3) That the completed Church, as it is called—some would differ as to the exact use of the word, whether we should say "the elect" or "select" or "the Church as a whole"—are to be expecting the return of the Lord, and to be translated to be for ever with Him.

The Times of the Gentiles.

Taking head No. 1, I ask whether all present have realised—without venturing to find particular dates or stating definitely what the words "months," "weeks," "day," or "hour" may mean—that because times are found in God's Word they must have some definite meaning for every one of us. If this is taken into consideration, I think we may easily agree that the times of the Gentiles must be almost, if not entirely, fulfilled. What, then, do we mean by "the times of the Gentiles"? Our answer is perfectly clear and simple. They are our Lord's own words, and you find them in St. Luke xxi. 24: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Now, putting the question in the simplest form, when can we commence the times of the Gentiles without entering too definitely upon the days and hours mentioned in Scripture? I think there is almost universal agreement that we are to look back and think of that time when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were both of them practically and entirely overthrown, and when the Gentiles took possession of Palestine and of the royal house of Jehoiakim. You are aware that from the year B.C. 599, or 598, or 597 there never has been a king of Israel and there never has been a king of Judah. When Nebuchadnezzar, in the reign of Jehoiakim—probably the third

year—took Palestine entirely from the Jews. and Jerusalem as the capital thereof, he definitely broke to pieces the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Whatever we may think of other times and seasons, we cannot doubt that then there began what may be definitely called "the times of the Gentiles," when they took real national power away from God's own people, Israel and Judah. From that time we think that we are to count onwards, so far as we may clearly gather from Scripture, as to the looked-for return of our Lord, and as to the coming of the glory of His kingdom. I speak tenderly and carefully about times and seasons, because I do not wish to dictate at all. But those who have most closely studied this subject are strongly of opinion that the "weeks" of Daniel must be taken as meaning years, which, added together, bring us through 2,520 years—up to when? To just about the decade or the year in which we are gathered together here in Queen's Hall. It may be ten, or twenty, or forty years ahead, for the question is whether we are to think of what are known as solar years, with $365\frac{1}{4}$ days in each; or of calendar years, with 360 days for a year; or of lunar years, with 354 days in each year. But whichever we take we cannot fail to come to this conclusion. that if the times of the Gentiles were to be for the "seventy weeks," and if we must take years for days, then we are brought to

this—that somewhere about the present time the times of the Gentiles are indeed to be fulfilled.

If that be so, then the question arises, Have we any right to believe that our Blessed Lord and Master is indeed coming ere long, and it might be to-day, or to-morrow, or any day soon? Think of all that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has said, and how He has told us, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." In other places He says, solemnly, "Watch! If the goodman had known when the thief would come, he would have been on the watch-tower looking for him, and would not have admitted him into his home." So He also says, "Be ye ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

The Signs of His Approach.

Let us ask, then, what does He give us as signs of His approach? My time is short, and I am only speaking very briefly. But I ask you, if you have not done so, humbly and carefully to study St. Matt. xxiv. and xxv., St. Mark xiii., and St. Luke xxi., and I defy any man who is honest and careful in such a research as this to lay aside the charge that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us to be ready about this very particular moment. I

am quite aware that in Da. xii. 4, 9 we find definite orders to "seal up and close the book until the time of the end." I am also quite aware that in Rev. xxii. 10 we are distinctly told, through St. John, not to seal or to close that book, for that "the time is at hand." Putting the two together, we must come to this conclusion—that for a certain time from the days of Daniel things were to be hidden, and were kept secret by the will and determination of Almighty God. And I am equally justified in saying that from the time of the apostle St. John, with the revelation given to him in Patmos, we are told to think that "the time is at hand," and that every day and hour men may lift up their heads and hopefully say, if they live to a certain particular time, "This is nigh unto the time mentioned by our Lord." Take one by one the signs that our Saviour has given, and I ask whether you see them being fulfilled at the present moment? I am aware that each one alone might be said to have always been taking place, more or less. Again and again in my humble experience I have been scoffed at and mocked at for saying that this or that sign is worthy of note as being fulfilled. Many people have said, "You're a fool; these things have been always going on—wars, and rumours of wars, etc., etc." Of course they have. But have they ever been such as they are to-day—together with, and besides novel

heresies, the advance of the science and thought of man as against the power and the revealed Word of God? Of course there have always been some such things on the earth; but what of to-day as compared with the past? Other signs the Saviour mentions, such as earthquakes. I remember well Mr. Gladstone, a man of authority on many subjects, being reported as saying shortly before he was taken away—I do not give the exact words, but recall what I read in a paper: "More earthquakes have taken place; in the last twenty years of my life more earthquakes have been recorded than in all the registered history of the world preceding these years." As you are aware, earthquakes have abounded in a remarkable way in our time. Other signs like those which the Saviour announced have surely been piled together as never before were thought of or seemed possible.

Turn now to the

Declarations and Teachings of St. Paul.

In the Epistles to the Thessalonians and to Timothy does he not in the most remarkable way bring out things to be expected, such as heresies, self-assertions, mental seditions, the unlifting of man as against God, novelties in regard to so-called religion, and in a way that cannot possibly be mistaken, as signs

which would show that the Lord is at hand, and which are being strikingly fulfilled at the time in which we live? These prophecies were never so fulfilled as now. Pack them altogether, then, and, further, take such a text as St. Matt. xxiv. 14: "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." It has been my humble privilege to study the times we live in, and I think I may safely affirm that in the last eight or ten years the Gospel has been carried into the only nations that lay in utter darkness, without any knowledge of the Word of God. I may be slightly exaggerating; I do not think I am. I well remember when, a few years ago, the Llama of Thibet came from his stronghold and stayed for a time in Calcutta, and was so struck with what he saw of modern life that he welcomed business people into Thibet; and with them has gone the Gospel, and Thibet has in the last few years received the Gospel as never before. One other part of the world, and only one, I know that lay in darkness and the shadow of death, of heathenism, and barbarism, is the Sudan. Ten years ago Karl Kumm walked from Lagos to Khartum, a distance of 3,000 miles, and immediately afterwards I and a few others had the privilege of starting the Sudan United Mission, and have now sent in sixty to seventy missionaries from the west

side and eight or ten from the east side of Australian friends, and thus we are taking the Gospel across the 3,000 miles of the untouched Sudan. Where will you find any actual "nation" now in which the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has not been lifted up as a "witness"?

"Then shall the end come,"

and we are to be ready in a moment—for what? I care not whether your study has led you to take up what is known as the Preterist theory, which declares that everything in the book of the Revelation of St. John was fulfilled by A.D. 100; or whether you take up the Historicist point of view, and say that all through the ages, from the time of St. John, history has been unveiling the pages of the Revelation from chap iv. to chap. xix.; or whether you take the Futurist view, and say that by the removal of the Bride the Lord Jesus shall prepare for the world the awful details that we find in Rev. iv. to xix. Take which you will. I humbly think there is a shade of truth in them all. To make a play upon words, I have ventured to say that the Preterist view is "*ment*" (meant), the Historicist view "*filment*," and the Futurist view "*fulfilment*." If all these three views have some basis of truth in them, then what do representatives of each, as well-recognised

students of Prophecy, tell us? They all agree that the time is at hand, that the Lord is coming, and that St. John, when he heard the Angel, i.e., the Saviour, say, "Behold, I come quickly," was able to answer, as we should be ready to do, and say, "Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus; come quickly."

It is to be

In a Single Moment.

Take 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Thess. iv. and put them together, and then let each of us say to himself, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall hear the trump of the archangel. That voice shall be heard, and in a moment, the twinkling of an eye, our eternal future shall be fixed." You may laugh if you think fit, but I have dared to stand for a time before the looking-glass to see how long it really takes one to wink; and with a realisation of the instantaneous meaning of the words, and the pious and humble hope that one should indeed be ready, one can say that what the apostle means must be very wonderful. "In a moment; in the twinkling of an eye; at the last trump." I would to God I had time to dwell upon "the last trump." But whatever *that* may mean, we now know and should realise that in a moment the heavens shall be opened, and the Lord shall appear for His beloved, His own, His elect, His Bride, and shall lift her up to meet Him in the air. Then

comes their glorious retirement for a little time, and the awful tribulation of those who are meantime upon the earth. Then the Lord descends, with His Bride at His side, to "take to Himself His great power and reign" over the earth. Are we ready? For at this very moment the Master might appear. Oh! to be able to say, "Thanks be unto God, I am with my Lord for ever!" Pardon me if I have intruded too long or too much in detail, but I am here simply to say how I thank God for the holy privilege of being a partner in this work of preparing for Christ's Advent, a work than which none can be more blessed or holy; and for all who will join in it, we shall thank God most heartily, and rejoice to know that more and more of the Lord's servants are really preparing for the coming of their Saviour.

Address by Pastor FULLER GOOCH.

I believe that I speak for all the signatories of the statement which our chairman has so fully brought before us this morning, when I say that we are met with a very profound sense of the seriousness of the step which has been taken by issuing the manifesto and calling this meeting together to-day. We are being told on various sides that we incur a serious responsibility in attempting to divert the thoughts of the Christian Church from social problems and various systems of reconstruction adapted to things as they are in the world to-day. To those who so speak of our movement and regard us as conjectural and speculative theorists I would like to say that I am quite sure of my brethren, as I am of myself, that we have most prayerfully and carefully considered the bearing of criticism like this. I feel, for one—and I am sure that the others are with me in this—that we are happy and we are thankful to God to be allowed to incur the responsibility which is upon us all in these solemn times to give our testimony and, we hope, awaken the testimony of thousands more, to what is of infinitely more importance than social schemes of any kind originating in the human mind. We feel this intensely, and when we look at

what many are suggesting to-day should take the place of the statement that we have issued, we are more and more thankful that our statement contains what we believe to be a faithful representation, so far as it goes, of the living Word of God.

The Return of Our Lord.

What strange things are being suggested to us to take the place of the return of our Lord; what strange things we are being told to induce us to withhold the testimony we are commencing to-day! We have been told within the last two or three weeks that there is no golden age of the world to be expected, that the conflict between good and evil must go on till the very end of time, and that there can be no expectation of a personal return of our Lord. We have also been told that the Lord will most certainly not reign upon the earth; that there can be no such kingdom as His personal return would set up. We have even been told this: that no one who ever did —to use the words I have in my mind—no one who ever did the New Testament the honour to become a scholar in its study has endorsed such a statement as we have made. Any such comment as that ignores altogether the whole history of the pre-Millennial theory from the beginning until to-day. I have no time or desire to go into that history this

morning; but I could show you that even in the dark ages and throughout the whole history of the Church there have been noble confessors of this great truth who have stood by it for the sake of the written Word of God. And as to scholarship in more recent times, one is not ashamed of the scholarship of men, as to the New Testament, like Dr. Tregelles and Dean Alford, and I would like to speak of another, one we all honour to-day—Dr. Handley Moule, Bishop of Durham. We might add to these names very many. But this is not a point of great importance with us, for we remember that our Lord said concerning the revealed things of God that it is God's plan to "hide them from the wise and prudent and reveal them unto babes." Our desire is as little children to sit at the feet of our coming Lord, to learn of Him, and to follow no schools of interpretation, whatever they are, but as disciples to follow Himself and His own precious Word.

We are not here to-day as controversialists; we are not here in any disputatious mood or with any disputatious purpose. We are moved by deep conviction of the truths that our chairman has enunciated and that our statement affirms. We can say—and I am not at all presuming, I am sure, in taking my brethren with me in this—we can say that, concerning these truths and our affirmation of them, necessity is laid upon us; yea,

woe is unto us if we conceal this important part of the whole counsel of God.

I want to say one other thing. It is in no measure of doubt or wavering of thought that we are here to-day. "We *believe*, and therefore *speak*." It has become, through the grace of God, a part of our inward, spiritual, experimental life to be looking for the cleaving of the heavens and the manifestation of the Son of God. If we thus feel and thus believe, dare we in these solemn days to keep silence or to withhold ourselves from any little influence we can exert to bring others to wait for the Son of God from heaven? I think it is an important statement for me to make in this address, that we desire at the very outset to declare that our convictions about this are based solely upon the Word of God. Many books—almost whole libraries, we might say—have been written upon this subject. We are not representing one of them; we are not tied or bound to any of them. There is a measure of truth, as our chairman has said, in all the theories that Christian, believing men have propounded. We fail to see that any of them give us the whole truth, and we feel that to tie ourselves to systems of men, to rival schools of thought, or to any propositions that cannot be substantiated by the very words of Scripture, would be to be unfaithful to our trust as stewards, as servants, of the Lord Jesus

Christ. Yes, we who are here to-day in this movement believe this Book to be what you, Mr. Prebendary, said it is—the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. We pin our faith to every statement in it without an exception, without any minimising of what the statements of Scripture are; and it is because of our such belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God that we take the stand which we are thankful to God to be allowed, in our different degree of gift and measure of responsibility, to take to-day.

We differ, of course—I mean we whose names are attached to this statement—on details of interpretation, but we are one—absolutely one—on the main theme of our propositions, namely, that the personal return of our Lord to this world in His second coming, as He came in the first, is *certain*; that it is essential to the fulfilment of the Inspired Word, and vital to the development of the Divine purpose. And withal we agree that from every sign of the times in which we live that coming is *imminent* in its approach. That is a great way to get in the matter of unity about the Lord's coming. I would that such a consensus of opinion could be realised and brought to bear upon all testimony written or spoken in these days. Our divisions have done very much, as I believe, to hinder the reception of the truth. We can afford to leave matters that are fairly debat-

able, and concerning which we, to some extent, at least, must wait for fulfilment to be quite certain about; we can afford to drop for the time such aspects of the question if only we can be one to-day to tell the slumbering world and the apostatising Church that the Lord Himself is at hand. *He is coming.*

Everything Around Us Says He is Coming Quickly.

Signs we discern; signs we appreciate in their solemn importance; signs we would study in the light of the Divine Word. But we are not looking for signs. We are looking for Christ. We are not looking for this and that and the other to happen before He comes. He is coming, and, as our propositions state, while it is true that the day when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives may be yet distant, and certainly is, that makes no difference to the blessed hope which He has given to those who are His redeemed, watching, waiting, believing servants—that at any moment He may come for them and take them out of the darkness of judgment that will soon burst upon a guilty world, and give them to look down from the lofty heights of His glory in yonder heavens upon a condition of things of which He has forewarned the world.

You know that there have been several dispensations which have preceded our Chris-

tian Age. In every one of these previous dispensations as their end has approached God has raised up special Advent Testimony. Go back to the antediluvian world. Just before the judgment of the Flood was ripe for its execution Enoch was taken, translated, that he should not see death, to be with his Lord. But before his translation he declared. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints," and that He was going to execute judgment on the ungodly for all their ungodly speeches and ungodly deeds, Jude xiv. 15. Did not it occur? The Flood came, and that Flood is our Lord's own type of what we are on the verge of seeing in another form of judgment upon this time of our own. Not only did He raise up Enoch for Advent Testimony as the end of the age drew near. But Noah, by a special impulse of the Holy Ghost, became a preacher of righteousness, warning, right and left, that men should flee from the wrath to come. Take the age after Noah. You know how the world had re-populated and how it soon broke away from God again, and judgment had to come. But there was a warning of it.

Melchisedek in that Age was Mediating with God and Testifying to Men.

When you come to patriarchal times you know how the three came from heaven, just before the judgment on the cities of the plain,

to tell Abraham, first, of what was coming, and to lead him to that mount of communion with God which, I trust, God may raise us to in this solemn time. They came to Abraham as he sat at the door of his tent. Then they went to Lot, and proclaimed in Sodom that the judgment was coming. The Advent Testimony sounded just before the floodgates of judgment opened up. It was just the same, as you know, in the land of Egypt, when the children of Israel were in the iron furnace and under the bondage of Pharaoh. Moses was raised up, and he went and proclaimed what was coming and to declare their redemption. He was sent to Pharaoh and his court to warn them of what was coming; and it came, and the redemption followed. It was the same with the Sinaitic dispensation. John the Baptist appeared, and declared that the axe was laid at the root of the tree. Our Lord proclaimed the end of the Age and the judgment on Jerusalem under Titus. Twelve were sent forth; seventy were sent forth. It was Advent Testimony. The end was at hand, and they were to go into every city and town and village where He Himself would go. It was warning, Advent Testimony, of the coming of the end.

It is to be so in this our Gospel Day.

The parable of the " Virgins " tells us that

the Midnight Cry will ring out. I believe this is a part of it; I believe this movement is a sort of gathering together of spiritual forces for testimony which has been preparing for some years past. There is the Midnight Cry, "Behold"—and, people, hear it, for it is God's message, not mine—"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Yes, and the King afterwards. But it is the Bridegroom to-day as we stand here; and soon the King will come. But there will be advent testimony to it all. When Israel is in the Tribulation, and just on the verge of being delivered by their returning King, two witnesses will be raised up and sent to bear Advent testimony, and to say how imminently nigh He is and how surely the end of God's forbearance with the world has come. If it be so in all past dispensations, cannot you see God's hand in its being so to-day? Surely it is so, as the whole Word of God declares.

Honoured brethren will take up the printed propositions, one by one, throughout the day. I have no time to dwell definitely in an expository way on many, scarcely on any, of the points involved therein. But let me just say this: there are two passages of Scripture in the New Testament which point to the termination of our present Age. The one was uttered by our Lord. It is in St. Luke xxi. 24: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be

fulfilled." The Prebendary has told us, and anyone must admit who has any belief in the Bible or in history, that those times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar. It is not easy to settle which particular year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign is the *terminus a quo*. If it were, we should fix the year of the Lord's return. But that is not for us to do. Would God that no one had ever fixed dates. We should have been in a far healthier position to-day about the coming of the Lord if those who have written on the subject learnedly and well had left out their fixed dates, for we have lived to see these dates pass by, and they have had to change them again and again. But the times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar.

It is very remarkable—I am not going into the question of the year, or which year, or into chronology at all in any full sense—but it is very remarkable that in Leviticus (ch. xxvi.) we are told four times by the prophet Moses that "seven times" of judgment would pass over Israel after their exclusion from the land before there would be a return of the Divine favour. We have Scripture for the statement that, at least in some uses of the term, the word "time" stands, in prophecy, for a year (Daniel iv. 16). We have "times," not the plural, but the Hebrew dual number, *two* years; and "half a time" (Daniel xii. 7). That year, and two

years, and half a time gives us just 42 months, which is 1,260 days—terms with which we are familiar in our study of the Scriptures (Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 5). If in that remote prophecy in Leviticus we see in the "seven times" seven prophetic years with 360 days in each, as we do see by the study of prophecy, again and again, we get exactly 2,520 years as the period during which these times of the Gentiles should last, and we see in the fulfilment of these "seven times" of judgment over a rebellious, unbelieving Israel—we see these times of the Gentiles brought down to their very end. We need not say that it is in this year or in that. But all schools of interpretation are agreed in this—that we are within the time of the fulfilment of these 2,520 years; and I believe I am right in saying that the furthest date that any of them suggest as fulfilling the date would be the year 1934. I have nothing to say about that at all, save that it represents the furthest limit of the view which an interpretation of prophecy leads to. Thus we know that we are on the verge of the end of the times of the Gentiles.

When that time is ended what is to happen? Jerusalem is no longer to be trodden down, but to be the land of a free Israel and of a regenerated Israel, according to the covenant of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their fathers. Surely, with our British flag

flying to-day over Jerusalem, we are touching the time when Jerusalem shall be no longer trodden down, but shall be the home of the free.

There is the other passage, with which I shall conclude. You will find it in Ro. xi. 26, where we are told that "all Israel shall be saved," and also that when that era or that salvation arrives "there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob"—there is the return of our Lord that we are looking for as soon to come,

At the end of the age.

You are told that when that time arrives the fulness of the Gentiles will have come in; the *complement* of the Gentiles, as Dean Alford translates it. What is that fulness of the Gentiles? When Israel was set aside through its unbelief and the crucifixion of the Lord, God revealed what He calls over and over again in the New Testament His "Mystery"—His mystery of grace, His beforetime unrevealed, undiscovered purpose—but made known when the time for it came by the special call and enduement of His apostle Paul (Eph. iii. 1-6). The time came for that "mystery" to be unfolded—Christ not only for Israel, but Christ for the whole

world—not the casting away of Israel or the breaking of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as though it were of no value; but that while the Redeemer was away, hidden in the heavens (Acts iii. 21), the Church should be gathered out of the world, an *Ecclesia* out of every kindred and tribe and tongue to be part of His glory when He comes (Acts xv. 13-18). That is why we know well that when He comes He will take His Church to Himself before He is seen of the world. For when He is seen by the world coming as the King, His redeemed Church, His special gift of God, during His rejection, shall swell the triumph of His train, and manifest His glory as Redeemer as well as King (Col. iii. 1-4).

We are on the eve of that completion of the ingathering of the fulness of the Gentiles. The Prebendary has told us of St. Matthew's word about the Gospel being preached to all the world for a witness. It has been so. There is not a word in the Bible to warrant the expectation that the Gospel will save the world under this dispensation. It is to save the Church out of the world. Then shall come the Redeemer of the world, redeeming Israel and making Israel the blessed channel for the knowledge of their King and Saviour going to all the earth (Rom. xi. 11-15). In the meantime the heathen shall rejoice under His sway, and the earth shall be filled with

the knowledge of the Lord, and with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

We are looking, then, first of all, for the *parousia* of our Lord—a word which never means coming in the sense of *motion*, but always in the sense and actual meaning of the Greek term, of *being present*. We are looking for His presence in the air. We are to meet our Lord on His way to earth (1 Thess. iv. 17).

The rapture of the Church

must precede His appearing on Olivet. We are waiting for that *parousia*, which may be at any moment. Happy they who are found watching and waiting. They shall hear the first call, "with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace."

Two things urge us to bear this testimony far and wide—the need of readiness on the part of God's people for what is so imminently before them, and the imperative necessity for hastening the work of evangelising the world and warning the unsaved of the peril they are in while not believing the Gospel of Christ. Of the first our Lord has said, "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. xxiv. 42-44); and of the second, "When once the Master of the house

has risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, He shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are" (Luke xiii. 24, 25; xvii. 26-30).

Address by Rev. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.

My dear fellow Christians,—Those of us who signed the Manifesto which is the basis of the addresses delivered to-day, and those of us who are delivering those addresses, are conscious, first, of the responsibility which such action creates; and secondly, and none the less definitely, of the authority which arises from profound conviction.

That Manifesto, as you will have observed, is characterized by marked indefiniteness as to detail, and by clarity as to its statement of broad principles. This Manifesto was not hurriedly drawn up. It was the outcome of prayerful thought and of much happy consultation. It is the Manifesto of men who differ even yet on some matters of interpretation, but who, as my friend Pastor Fuller Gooch has said, are absolutely of one mind and one heart as to the broad principles to which I have already referred.

Our venerable and venerated chairman said at the beginning of this meeting that it was hoped that the speakers would adhere to the points indicated. That I propose to do most resolutely, and I am now about to speak to the second proposition:

"That the Revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment, when He will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection."

That proposition is characterized by simplicity, by clearness, and by the absence of anything like detailed interpretation. As I approach it I desire to emphasize what has been already said both by the chairman and Pastor Fuller Gooch, namely, that our testimony assumes the full and final authority of the New Testament Scriptures. By that I do not exclude the Old, but lay my emphasis upon the New. It seems to me that it is necessary that we realize that those to whom that assumption is impossible will not be able to follow us in what we are teaching. If the Bible be indeed, as a friend of mine has recently said it is, an admixture of an "essential Gospel" with "a good deal of the rubble and silt of human thought," then, of course, it is possible that we may be wrong in the things we affirm, because the Bible may be wrong. I am not now proposing to argue that, but it is important that we should remember that we do not accept that view of the Bible. We claim no finality for our own interpretation, but we do speak as those who believe in the absolute, full, and final authority of whatever these Scriptures of truth teach.

Turning to the proposition, then, may I ask you to observe the limits of its statement? First, it postulates a coming Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, it makes a statement as to the nature of that Revelation in the words, "He will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples on the evening of the resurrection." Centrally, it indicates what must be the attitude of believing hearts to the truth, as it declares that "He may be expected at any moment." These, then, are the three matters that I desire to deal with, taking them in the order I have now indicated.

The coming Revelation of the Lord Jesus.

The fact which we are here to affirm as constituting the hope of the Church and the world is that of the coming Revelation of the Lord. In passing, I should like to say that for me that hope burns no more brightly today than it has done for the past thirty years. It is the one blessed hope which maketh not ashamed.

Now, in order that we may be perfectly simple, fundamental, and even elementary, I would remind you of the real force of this word Revelation. It is a translation of the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which means literally and simply, *unveiling*. The idea is that of the making manifest of something

which has been hidden. Therefore, when we speak of the Revelation of the Lord we mean that He Who has been hidden is to be unveiled and made clearly manifest. Now that can only be accurately apprehended as we remember that the whole conception recognizes a past and a present, while it indicates a future.

To speak of the unveiling of the Lord is necessarily to recognize the first Advent. We think of One Who appeared in human history; Whose advent was dated not only by the Jewish, but by the Roman calendar. It would hardly seem necessary to emphasize this were it not that it is being said in certain quarters that there never has been such a Person as Jesus, but that spiritual ideas, generated within the minds of different men, in process of time have been presented in the form of an ideal personality. We speak of the Revelation of an actual Person, a Man of our own humanity, and yet One Who in His human life was a Person of unfathomable and infinite mystery. As we study our New Testament we find that it is impossible to place Jesus of Nazareth, even in the fact of His humanity, exactly upon the level of our own. To do that we are driven to eliminate certain statements of the New Testament concerning Him, such, for instance, as the account of the Virgin Birth. Briefly, then, we say that when we speak of the Revelation

of the Lord we are thinking of a Person, not of an idea; and yet we are thinking of One Who was, in the days of His human life, a mystery beyond the possibility of our complete explanation.

When we speak of this Revelation we are thinking not merely of a past, but of a present. That is to say, we believe that the Person who walked the ways of men, and was known of men in His humanity, still exists. In the words of Peter, recorded in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we think of "Jesus, Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things." That view of Him is necessarily implicated in the idea of His Revelation. The ascension was not an event in which the actual personality of Jesus of Nazareth was vapourized or spiritualized so that it no longer exists. We believe that at this very moment the Man of Nazareth, Jesus, is in the heavens, as surely as positively a human Person, as when the disciples saw Him after His resurrection, and finally saw Him pass out of sight in the cloud.

If these, then, be the things which the declaration recognizes, that which it indicates is that this same Person is again to appear, to be unveiled, to be manifested. That means that His second advent will be as historic as was His first; that He will actually come into

the midst of human history on some date in the human calendar, which, no man knows, and which, no man is intended to know; that in the actuality of this coming He will be at once as positively a Person as in His first advent, and as mysterious also.

We base that conviction, first, upon His own plain statements; secondly, upon the clear apostolic teaching of the New Testament; and finally, upon the naturalness of it, indeed, the necessity of it, in view of His first advent. Whereas grace had its epiphany, its outshining, in the lowliness of His first marvellous coming and life, so glory must have its epiphany, its outshining, in the majesty of that coming, which He described as being "in the glory of His Father with His angels." We believe the age in which we live is bounded by these advents, because our Lord declared that it would be consummated by His coming; because His apostles taught that it would be so; and because we see, in the process of the age, that there is no other hope for the world. More than ever to-day, hope, centred in earthly thrones or governments, in human diplomacies, in leagues of nations, is seen to be futile. The only hope which maketh not ashamed is that which believes that when God has overturned, overturned, overturned, He shall come, Whose right it is.

The Nature of the Coming Revelation.

When we turn from the fact itself to consider its nature we realize how full of fascination the subject is. In our proposition it is stated, with studied simplicity and definiteness, in the words, "He will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection." Here, I am sure, I shall be permitted by those associated with me in the drawing-up of this Manifesto if I slightly modify the wording, so that it shall be: He will be manifested as evidently as to His disciples after His resurrection. Thus I do not confine myself to the first evening merely. The question, then, which we have to consider is a very simple and a very familiar one, and yet of great importance. It is that, namely, of what the disciples did see of this Person after His resurrection. We have in our New Testament the account of fourteen manifestations—ten before His ascension, and four afterwards.

On the first day there were five appearings of the Lord. He was seen of Mary of Magdala, in the brightness of the morning in the garden; of other women as they were travelling from the tomb to tell His disciples that it was empty; of Peter in some quiet, lonely interview; of Cleopas and another as they travelled to Emmaus; and of His apostles,

Thomas being absent, in the evening time, in the upper room.

On the eighth day He was seen again of the apostles, Thomas being present.

During the thirty-two days that followed before His ascension we are told of four appearances; to seven by the sea in the beauty of the early morning, when He prepared a breakfast for them, and held His conversation with Peter; to a great assembly of over five hundred brethren at once in Galilee, when He uttered the missionary commission recorded by Matthew; to James in another unrecorded interview; and finally to the group of disciples as He led them out as far as to Bethany, and lifting up His hands in blessing upon them, was parted from them.

After the ascension we have the account of four occasions upon which He manifested Himself—to Stephen in the awful hour of his martyrdom; to Saul of Tarsus as he journeyed to Damascus; to Paul in prison when circumstances were buffeting his spirit, and he was almost in despair; and finally to John in mystic glory and wonder in the Isle of Patmos. All these appearances were very definite to those who saw them.

We ask, therefore, what did these witnesses see? Necessarily such a question necessitates a careful consideration of all the stories, and it will be recognized that such consideration

is not possible here and now. We may, however, summarize by saying that they saw the self-same Jesus with Whom they had walked and talked through those wonderful three years of His public ministry. They saw Him standing, they saw Him sitting, they saw Him walking, they saw Him eating, they heard Him talking, and it was always the same Jesus.

But let us look again. There was a difference. There were new conditions; there were elements of mystery which did not deny the fact, but which inevitably kept them in an attitude of wonder. He was with them more than once, and they did not know Him. He was able so to veil Himself that while they realized they were talking to a real Person they did not know who He was. Then suddenly of His own will He broke through the veil, and they discovered Him, and knew absolutely that it was Jesus to Whom they had been talking and Who had been talking to them. He appeared to them over and over again unexpectedly, suddenly. His presence was discovered to them actually. With equal and mysterious suddenness He disappeared, so that He was not manifestly present. They saw Him quite definitely—and now I am going to use a word which in some senses may seem to be an awkward one, and yet it is necessary—they saw Him materially. Said He to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and

see My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side." They saw Him, moreover, actually eat. He asked them, "Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish. And He took it, and did eat before them." Thus it will be seen that whereas He was very really the same Person, He was living under new conditions, manifesting Himself to them and eating in their midst, although He entered the room without the shooting of a bolt, or the opening of a door.

Our affirmation is, then, that He, the self-same Jesus, is to be again manifested as evidently as to those disciples after His resurrection. That is the supreme and glorious hope of the Church, and of the Church for the world. We are not now dealing with the order or sequence of His appearings, but with the central fact, that this self-same Jesus is actually to come again into the affairs of the world, to lay His hand upon the reins of government, and establish order; that He is coming to take this smitten, sin-stricken earth under His immediate and personal government, in order that wrong may be righted, and the Kingdom of God established.

I am constrained to halt for a moment here still to emphasize things already dealt with, namely, that this truth involves the first advent, and the present and continued existence of Jesus of Nazareth as a Man hidden

in the heavens until this time of restoration. We sometimes use the phrase, "In the days of His flesh," as though such days ended with the ascension. As a matter of fact, these also are the days of His flesh in some senses. It is perfectly true that Paul said, "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more." But in that statement the phrase "after the flesh" qualifies the knowledge, and not the Person. It will be remembered that the words immediately preceding it are, "Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh." They do not mean that no man is living a physical life, but that our knowledge of them is conditioned by spiritual truth, and this is clearly so with regard to the statement concerning our Lord. He still exists in His actual and perfect humanity, and if once we lose that certainty, then, of course, the whole idea of His Revelation will be lost.

The teaching of the New Testament is that this hidden One is to appear. When? At the right moment in the economy of God. Where? We shall say undoubtedly, certainly upon the mount of Olives, but, we may also add, wherever else is necessary; just as He appeared on the way to Emmaus, or in the upper room, or in any locality where His presence served His high purpose. Under the new conditions of His new life following upon resurrection, no longer hindered by the pro-

cesses of locomotion which we associate with human personality as we know it, He will appear suddenly anywhere, in order to the carrying out of His purposes. If we ask another question, How will He appear? our answer will be that He will certainly first appear in a cloud, as the two men declared to the disciples when, after the cloud had received Him out of their sight, they said, "This Jesus which was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." We shall also declare that He will come as He said, in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. That phrase, "in the glory of His Father," to my own mind refers rather to the absolute and final splendour of His human nature than to any accessories which are merely spectacular, and which we are apt to associate with the word glory. All these things are matters, perhaps, of speculation. The supreme fact is that Jesus is yet to be manifested anew, and in such wise that the whole world will see Him. He Himself is coming to complete the work He began, and in order that all the processes of this age may be gathered up and carried out to the larger issues of the ages that lie beyond.

The True Attitude of the Believer.

Thus we come, in conclusion, to the central

matter of our proposition, which declares that He "may be expected at any moment." The first thing that I want to stress with all the power I have is that that very statement means that we are entirely ignorant as to when He will come. From the hour of ascension until now it has been true that He might have come at any moment. I am quite sure that I speak what is in the hearts of all God's waiting children when I say that we should rejoice indeed if by His coming He ended the very testimony we are bearing to Him to-day. But it may not be to-day. It may not be to-morrow. It may not be for many years. In all this there must be an element of uncertainty, and that element of uncertainty is created partly and necessarily by the fluctuation of human attitudes toward the things of God. The Divine determinations have nothing to do with human dates. They have to do with times and seasons, but the duration of these very times and seasons which are in the Father's authority may be changed by God as the result of human action. The principle is illustrated in the book of Jonah. The Divine word definitely was that within forty days Nineveh should be destroyed. But Nineveh was not destroyed for over a hundred years, because of the change of a human attitude and the repentance of a city. The date was changed, but the determination was not changed. Therefore, in our consideration of

this matter I submit that it is of the utmost importance that we remember that, when considering the things of God, we must eliminate all almanacs and time-tables and human dates. God is long-suffering, and He waits not for a fixed date, but for a fulfilled purpose.

That phrase—a fulfilled purpose—leads me to the next thing I desire to say. If there are elements of necessary uncertainty, what are the elements of certainty involved in this truth? They are that our Lord will certainly come for His people, and with His people; that He will be manifested in the fulness of the times; that is, when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Now, it has been objected that the testimony to the actuality of the appearing of our Lord is invalidated by the fact that again and again in the history of the Christian Church men have been pointing to what they have considered to be the nearness of the Revelation, because of the apparent fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles. This, however, does not invalidate the testimony. It is perfectly true that this kind of testimony has been borne again and yet again. And is it not true that the times of the Gentiles have often approached fulfilment, but they have never been fulfilled? It may be—and let us say it with profound awe and reverence—that over and over again the forty days have been lengthened to the hun-

dred years, because of the change of human attitude toward God, and of His long-suffering patience. Nevertheless we all feel to-day that never in the history of the Church have the signs seemed so definitely to point to the fulfilling of Gentile times as they do to-day. Amos, the prophet herdman from Tekoa, when delivering his messages in the northern Kingdom concerning surrounding nations, employed a formula of poetic imagery, which it is well that we remember. Said he, "For three transgressions, yea for four." In each case this formula revealed the principle that the judgment of God, in its activity of punishment, never falls upon a people until they have filled to the full the cup of their iniquity. That principle is certainly operating in the circumstances in the midst of which we live to-day. All the fearful and fiery judgments that are abroad in the earth are the result of "three transgressions, yea four." That is to say, the world is seeing to-day the working out in a ghastly and terrible manifestation of all its own philosophies. The times of the Gentiles are being fulfilled.

If I am asked for a personal opinion I do not hesitate to say that I do not consider that this is Armageddon. It does not seem to me that the "man of sin" has been revealed. I say, however, quite resolutely, that I am careless as to the accuracy of my own view in this regard. I admit and am moved by the con-

viction that men have never before seen the working out of the principle of godlessness so completely as to-day, and therefore I feel that the Lord may be revealed at any moment.

No words can better describe the true attitude and responsibility of the children of God than those which our Lord Himself employed. Our loins should be girt about, and our lamps should be burning. We should be occupying until He come. This does not for a moment mean that we should be gazing into the heavens and hoping to escape from the earth; but that we should be dedicating ourselves with all our powers to the King's business, proclaiming His evangel, seeking for the salvation of the lost, declaring the principles of His Kingdom, and so far as in us lies insisting upon their application to all the affairs of life. All the while, while this hope burns before us, we shall catch and reflect upon the darkness of the age, the light and the glory of His appearing.

"Broken lies creation,
Shaken earth's foundation,
Anchorless each nation,"

and the Church, as it understands His will, is praying to-day as never before,

"Lord, come away."

Let us also pray that we may be led into the patient waiting for Christ, and delivered

from all impatience. In proportion as this is so, if He comes to-day, we shall meet Him with glad hearts; and if in the morning we wake and find that He has not come, we shall greatly rejoice, knowing that this further delay is also in the long-suffering of God, and that He can make no mistake. So will we watch and wait with patience and with song, knowing that He shall surely "come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds."

Advent Testimony Addresses.

Thursday Afternoon, December 13th, 1917.

Letter from the Rev. A. C. Dixon, D.D.

METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE,
Newington Butts, S.E.1.
December 10, 1917.

Dear Dr. Meyer,—I very much regret that an engagement of long standing, which takes me to Cardiff, prevents me from being present at this "Advent Testimony" Meeting, for I would like to call attention to what seem to me, as I study the Scriptures, to be "Twelve certainties concerning the return of our Lord."

1. *It is certain* that He will return, for He said, "I will come again," and He surely meant what He said.

2. *It is certain* that no one but God knows when He will return, though the present world crisis points to its near approach.

3. *It is certain* that He will return in His resurrection body, for the two men in white apparel said to the disciples, as they saw

Him ascend: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into Heaven."

4. *It is certain* that He will return *suddenly* and *unexpectedly*, for "as the lightning cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West: so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." "Behold, I come as a thief." "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

5. *It is certain* that He will return *gloriously*. "The Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him."

6. *It is certain* that, when He returns, He shall find the world going on in its usual course of pleasure-seeking, business, and sin. "For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed."

7. *It is certain* that He will return for His people, for the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

8. *It is certain* that He will return with His people, for "Behold, He cometh with ten thousand of his saints." Then will He establish His Kingdom on earth, and begin His Millennial reign.

9. *It is certain* that between His coming for His people and His coming with His people some great world events will take place, as predicted in the Scriptures.

10. *It is certain*, therefore, that we ought to be expecting His return for His people at any moment.

11. *It is certain* that this "Blessed Hope" of the Lord's return for us at any moment makes us, not mystical dreamers, but faithful servants, for we turned to God from idols to serve the Living and True God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven. The true Christian is one who *serves* while he *waits*.

12. *It is certain* that the hope of Christ's return constrains us to purity of life, for "we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is: and every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

In the joyful hope that the Lord may return for us at any moment,

I am, very cordially yours,

(Signed) A. C. DIXON.

Address by Rev. F. B. MEYER, D.D. (Presiding):

The meetings of this day are remarkable for many reasons, some of which I will not trouble you with, but two or three are supremely significant. First, we have a meeting of two confluent streams in the channel bed of a united Testimony.

Origin of the Meetings.

These gatherings commenced with a little group of the servants of Christ who felt that the time was rife for the utterance of an awakening call to the churches; and after their plans had commenced to assume shape it was discovered that the brethren of the Prophecy Investigation Society, under a similar impression, were moving towards a similar end. Their presence in such large and representative numbers on this platform indicates that though there are wide differences in the interpretation of certain passages of Scripture and in the deductions to be made from them, there is yet a unity of spirit, purpose, and general assent to the basic propositions, which cannot fail to have a profound effect on thinking people.

Object of the Meetings.

Secondly, it is to be understood that these

meetings are not called primarily for teaching, or exposition, but for **witness.** We do not feel led to argue for the statements which are made on the authority of Scripture. The fact of their being set down on the sacred page is sufficient warrant for our witness. The herald does not argue nor explain—he bears witness to things which have been committed to his care. The time will come. when these meetings close, for the further explanation and elucidation, so far as possible, of the facts and truths which we are handling. But at this point the representatives of various aspects of Christian thought, faith, and activity stand together as messengers and heralds of things not seen as yet, but, as we see it, clearly revealed in Scripture as imminent. "These things which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you."

Thirdly, these meetings, though we had no thought of this when they were planned. exactly synchronize with the Fall, or rather **the Liberation of Jerusalem.** You will remember our Lord's words that she would be trodden down by the Gentiles until their times were fulfilled, and that then would come an end to the long-continued sorrows of her children. I need hardly remind you of the precise sequences of Luke xxi. 24-28—the signs, the perplexity of distress, the shaking of the powers in heaven, and the coming of the Son of Man.

History, Prophecy, and the Testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts bear their threefold and unmistakable witness to the Testimony which we give here to-day.

The Apostle in 1 Cor. x. 11 states that the ends of the ages had come on the people whom he addresses. In other words, they were living at a joint in time; at a time when one great age, or part of an age, was concluding and another beginning. No words could better describe our own position. In our time also a great era is closing in and another opening. Those who have visited the Arctic Circle in summer have witnessed a sublime natural spectacle. Because the sun dips for only a brief interval the fading glory of the dying day bathes with splendour the clouds of the western sky, whilst the east is flushed with the roseate hues of dawn. Evening and morning greet one another in the same sky. So we watch the fading splendour of the Era or Age, which our Lord called **"the Times of the Gentiles,"** which for 2,500 years has ruled the world, and we welcome the dawn of the new era in which Jesus Christ will be supreme and his words the foundations of society.

When the Almighty Creator began to prepare our earth to be the home of man He laid the foundations in successive slabs of material which geologists have named Silurian, Triassic, Sandstone, Carboniferous and the

like, always preparing for human life on this planet; and, similarly, after man had been introduced as child and tenant, the Eternal began to build Time in a series of slabs, which we call ages or æons. These are perpetually referred to in Scripture, but the A.V. and R.V. alike have confused the view of the ordinary reader by rendering the Greek word by *world* instead of by *age*. In Matt. xxviii. 20 our Lord never said the end of the *world*, but the end of the *age*. These ages from the Dawn of the Human Era to the Present Hour may be characterised generally thus: the Age of Creation, the Patriarchal Age, the Age of the Hebrew Kingdoms, the Age of Rejection, and the Times of the Gentiles, the Millennial Age, the Age of Judgment, introducing the Eternal Age. Each of the earlier ages is built on the same general plan, and probably this explains the various schools of prophetic interpretation, and gives the reason why the same passages, as, for instance, Matt. xxiv., may be applied with equal truth to more than one epoch in history. Each ends in a crisis of judgment; each is marked towards its close by abounding wickedness; each suffers from some embodiment of Might against Right; and each contains the records of noble souls that counted not their lives dear.

The Manifestation of Our Lord.

It is at the junction of these two ages,

which are meeting in our time, that we look for the manifestation of our Lord, first to His people, and afterwards (a longer or shorter interval having passed) to the world. We have no information as to the day or hour, and disassociate ourselves from those who attempt to fix either. At an hour when men think not the Son of Man will come. We believe that we are to continue our present efforts for Christian unity, for peace, and for the uplift of the downtrodden and oppressed. The Lord, when He comes, will expect His servants to be so doing. He says: Occupy till I come. But we have long been feeling that our protests against wrong need to be reinforced by a dynamic force which we cannot bring into operation, but which we believe will be supplied when the malign forces which now operate on human destinies, and which the Apostle calls "the rulers of the darkness of this world," are replaced by the presence of Christ and His Church in the heavenly places, and when to wise servants are given cities to control, as they rule them, spiritually and from the Unseen. It is therefore that we raise our voice, asking the Lord speedily to accomplish the number of His elect and to hasten His kingdom. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and by Thy presence bring the Eternal Day.

Address by the Rev. E. L. LANGSTON, M.A.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! The voice of thy watchman! they lift up the voice, together dò they sing! for they shall see, eye to eye, when the Lord returneth to Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem."

Do we not stand to-day almost on the very verge of the fulfilment of this glorious prophecy in regard to the future glory of Israel? God's purposes for world redemption are wrapped up in that race; and for those of us who will be studying, as we have never studied before, the Prophetic Word, may I throw out a hint? There are five chosen persons or places in the Bible that are wrapped up in God's plans and purposes for this world—an elect or chosen nation, an elect or chosen land, an elect or chosen city, an elect or chosen king, elect or chosen individuals, viz., the Church of God. God's purposes for this devil-driven world are wrapped up with the destiny of those five elect persons or places.

The Chosen People.

This afternoon one wants to speak of those first two—the chosen people and the chosen land. It has been my lot and privilege during the past few years to have visited the Jewish race in North Africa, Asia Minor, Turkey, Rumania, Austria, Hungary, Galicia, and in Russia, and there have seen something of the appalling conditions under which the brethren of our Lord, according to the flesh, are living. One has gone into rooms in Russia; just small rooms, with two or three families in each room, where they have had to live, morning, noon, and night, in almost unspeakable misery and filth. Since the war broke out one has been again into Russia, down the River Volga to Nishni Novgorod, Penza, and other places, where there are something like $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Jewish refugees going through untold horrors in this day of darkness. The suffering that the Jews are now undergoing are typical of what they have been enduring ever since their dispersion in A.D. 70. And now, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come," is the message which we can take to this downtrodden, depressed race, this race that has been illtreated and in all countries disliked. Looking at their present condition, how literally true is the Word of God: "The Lord shall scatter thee among all the peoples, from the one end of the earth

unto the other end of the earth. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God is were morning!" Such has been their condition now amongst all nations at different periods during the past nineteen centuries; hunted and haunted amongst the nations, wanderers, restless, unloved, and disliked.

But the Word of God is to be literally fulfilled with regard to this race. Lev. xxvi. 44: "Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly and to break my covenant with them: for I am Jehovah their God." We must take the Word of God literally to-day. Listen to these words of God's unalterable law with regard to this race—Jer. xxxi. 31-37: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, al-

though I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: if these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

The Chosen Land.

Now to-day, dear friends, we are glad to live in a period when God is about to do these things on behalf of the children of Israel and the children of Judah. There are indications

now manifest and clear that God is about to restore Israel into favour again. Just twenty years ago, in 1897, there were gathered together away in Basle a large number of Jews. Their convener was a well-known Roumanian lawyer (Dr. Hertzl), who, seeing the distress of his brethren in every country, called together delegates from all the Jewries of the world to come and join him at Basle for the purpose of considering the future of their race. As a result of their discussions a famous manifesto was put forth by that now celebrated conference which might be summed up in the words "Palestine for the Jews." That manifesto was written up and circulated in the press of the world. Many of the educated and Reformed Jews on reading those famous words said, "The whole scheme is Utopian. It is a movement before its time. The Turk will never allow us to go back to Palestine. It is absolutely absurd!" But what hath God wrought? Thirty-five years ago in Jerusalem there was a population of about twenty-four thousand people. of whom only four thousand were Jews. Just before the outbreak of war there were at least in Jerusalem eighty thousand people. That is to say, if Josephus is correct, Jerusalem had as large a population as in the days of our Lord. Of those eighty thousand people there were at least—I am giving you the minimum number; some authorities put it

much higher—there were at least sixty-five thousand Jews in that city, i.e., four-fifths of the population of Jerusalem being Jews. Thus, for the first time since A.D. 70, and within the lifetime of the large majority of us present, Jerusalem has become a Jewish city. Palestine is but a little land, only a little larger than Wales, and for nineteen centuries, like the people, has been barren and desolate, with a slight rainfall.

As a result of Zionism we have seen during the past few years planted up and down the Holy Land something like forty to fifty agricultural colonies manned only by Jews, the sacred tongue, Hebrew, being revived and spoken by little children in those colonies. Remember that as a result of the reign of "the unspeakable Turk" everything in that land was taxed that could possibly be taxed, so much so that even trees were taxed from sixpence to two shillings and sixpence a tree. But as the result of Zionist influence in that land in one colony alone over 400,000 fruit trees have been planted and some millions of vine slips. After this partial opening-up of Palestine there follows this devastating war, and we have seen, and are seeing, as a result, the Turk being turned, bag and baggage, out of the Holy Land. To-day we are thrilled when we think of the sacred privilege that has been granted to our beloved country in being allowed by God to

enter into the Holy City, and to thus deliver it from the thraldom of both the Turk and the Moslem. What an honour God has given to us as a country in allowing the Union Jack to fly over that city!

The Future of Jerusalem.

At the same time, and coinciding with our taking of Jerusalem, there were gathered together in Westminster a number of politicians to consider what is to be the future both of the Jew and of Palestine, their advisers—another instance of the overruling providence of God—being distinguished Jews. Why are they there? Why has God overruled that they should be there? As a result of their combined deliberations facilities are to be given to the Jewish race to settle down again in this our time in their own country. We are, therefore, likely to see in the near future a Jewish State in Palestine. It may be in a month or two, it may be in a year or two; but the intention is to restore the land to the people and the people to the land.

To men of the world it must be a strange and remarkable thing to consider that the very words of Scripture are being fulfilled. For look at Isa. xiv. 1, 2; xlix. 22; and lxvi. 20, and you will see there that the Gentile powers, the nations, are to be the instruments in God's hands for restoring the land to the people and the people to the land. God has

given the British army and nation the privilege of opening-up the doors of the land to the people whose ownership it really is.

We want to ask ourselves the question today, Why must this land go back to the people, and why must the people go back to the land? To answer this question we must go far back in the purposes of God and study that epoch-making chapter in the Bible, viz., Gen. xii.

The Covenant of God.

There, in the first three verses—remarkable verses—God takes out of the nations of the world a man, and He enters into an unconditional covenant with that man. In that covenant there are seven clauses, and the seventh clause of that covenant is this: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." That covenant is reiterated to all the Patriarchs and to the house of Israel "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So far that covenant has not been fully fulfilled. But you say, "Surely it was fulfilled in Christ." Then I ask you, How is it that there are 800 million people on the fact of this earth who know nothing of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Israel, in those wonderful Messianic Psalms, full of the destiny and future glory of their race, burst out in a pæan of praise, as, for instance, in Psa. lxvii., first of prayer. and then of praise: "God be merciful unto

us." That is what Israel is praying to-day. "And bless us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." Isa. xxvii. 6: "In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud: and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit."

The Return of the Jews.

Now the Jews are going back, and when they go back to their land they are going back, we believe, to trouble. For on returning to the land they must face their sorest trial if we read prophecy aright; a time will come when they will almost be annihilated. Suddenly, however, when all seems to be hopeless, they are to get a vision of their Messiah and King championing their cause. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 1-9); and in Zech. xii. 10 we read, "They shall look unto Me whom they have pierced." The Jewish nation is, therefore, suddenly to receive a revelation of the Christ, which will have such a marvellous effect upon that race that the whole land mourns, "every family apart, the family of David apart, the family of Nathan apart, the family of Levi apart, the family of Shimei apart; the whole land mourning apart because of the awful tragedy of the Cross, because they had spurned the Son of God, their Messiah.

After that vision, and after that day of mourning, what is to happen? You get a picture of it in Isa. lxi. 6: "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God." Zechariah tells us that "ten men"—the complete number—"shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." What a glorious day that will be when all Israel shall be saved!

Then what are they destined to accomplish? Again they will be dispersed among the nations, but no longer to be a curse, a stumbling-block; for wherever they go they publish peace and salvation; they are to be the means in God's hands of bringing the nations of this world to know the Lord our God, and lead them into the paths of holiness and righteousness.

And now, in the light of that day, realising that these things are coming to pass, that God's purposes are being carried out, that the powers of sin and hell are going to be broken, and that the messengers of the Lord are going back to be prepared for their glorious destiny—what is our duty? Surely the command to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" comes to us now with renewed force and emphasis. The God of Israel is here today speaking with no uncertain sound to our innermost souls, saying: "Ye that are the

Lord's remembrancers, ye that make mention of the Lord, take ye no rest; and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

It is an awful thing for us to gather together on an occasion like this, living at such a crisis, hearing the word of God from His servants and from His Book, and not being prepared to go all lengths with God, and to place ourselves absolutely at His disposal for Him to do with us as He wills. We are longing to see the manifestation of the Presence and Power of God in our own country; we are longing to see the remnant of the house of Israel gathered in. We are here all before our God with one heart-longing, and our one cry is, "Father, glorify Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done upon earth, as it is in heaven." Shall we not, in the light of these days and the signs of these times, pray with all earnestness, such as we have never perhaps prayed in our life before, to our Master here and now: "Lord, here am I; take me, use me as Thou wilt, how Thou wilt, where Thou wilt. May I be filled with all Thy fulness, that all who come into touch with me may see and know that 'It is not I, but Christ.'" Thus shall we be waiting, watching, ready, looking for that glorious day when we shall be united with Him in the heavenlies, and preparing to reign with Him in the days to come.

Address by Preb. H. E. FOX, M.A.

"That all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the Second Coming of the Lord, because all nations will then be subject to His rule."

In dealing with the subject entrusted to me I shall assume that the Second Coming of the Lord is that which He promised in His last discourse with His disciples: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also" (St. John xiv. 3).

I shall also assume that the primary incident of this Coming is described in 1 Thess. iv. 16, where it is said that "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This is also mentioned in 1 Cor. xv. 52.

The False Messiah.

So the epoch of the Church on earth will come to an end. A false Christendom will enthrall the world. There will be reconstruc-

tions, but of a terrible kind. A confederacy of the nations will be ruled by an autocrat endowed with Satanic powers, who will seek to extinguish every trace of the worship of the true God and will put himself in the place of Christ. Descriptions of these dark days and this fearful being are given in 2 Thess. ii and in the xiiith and following chapters of the Revelation. The tyrant will be the bitter foe of the Hebrew people, who will then have returned wholly or in part, but still in unbelief, to occupy the land given by God to Abram and his race by a covenant which has never been revoked and the title deeds of which are in every Bible. The Jews will have re-occupied Jerusalem and rebuilt their temple. The false Messiah will have gathered the armies of the world against the Holy City. But in Israel's extremity the Redeemer will come to Zion, as both Isaiah and St. Paul foretold. The enemy will be overwhelmed in the greatest battle which has ever been known, and then will be fulfilled to the minutest detail that wonderful scene of recognition, repentance, and restoration foretold by Zechariah. The Son of David will reign in David's City over the world. Jerusalem will be the centre of government and worship. There will be reconstructions, but by other hands and on other lines than the world has ever dreamed. Evil will not be extinct, but good will prevail. Even the warfare of

nature will cease, and the very beasts of prey will be tamed. It will be **a reign of righteousness** and piety which will draw men together in drawing them to God. And so the old covenant promise will have its complete fulfilment, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." But even this sublime reconstruction will come to an end, and for the last time mankind will be tested and found wanting. Though for a thousand years "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," human nature will be the same. No sooner is Satan loosed than the nations are again deceived by him, and again are gathered to besiege "the beloved city" (Rev. xx. 7-12). But again they will be destroyed. **Reconstructions will then be over.** The great Judgment will be held, and "before the face of Him that sat on the throne the earth and the heaven fled away." It will be over "a *new* heaven and a *new* earth" that the Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Yet how naturally in this our age, where Satan is still a "prince," rises the human cry for reconstruction. The past three and a-half years have shaken the nations as never before. The unsettlement at the time of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars in our fathers' days seems small indeed beside that of the present time. With startling swiftness the old order is changing, and everywhere

men are clamouring for the new, forgetful, too often, of the sublime word of Him Who says, "I am the Lord, I change not—therefore ye . . . are not consumed" (Mal. iii. 6).

From the days of Babel men have been constantly reconstructing, and because they have done this mostly for their own objects and in their own ways, without giving heed to God's purposes and plans, the history of the human race is strewn with ruined reconstructions, and all the more as advancing knowledge of the material, but ever-changing things of this world, obscures the vision of the eternal things which are only seen by the eye of faith.

Apostasy of the Last Days.

The prophetic glimpses of the last days given both by our Lord and His apostles seem to point to conditions in which restless anxiety seeks relief from some man-made remedy. We are told that the faith of many will be shaken and their love grow cold. The Kingdom of Heaven will seem so far away as to have become almost a name that has no meaning. Teachers of spurious religions or of a diluted Christianity will attract by novelty and skill too many willing followers. Formalities of the old faith may exist and even be multiplied, but they will have no sanctifying power. Science and scholarship which have abolished Jonah and Daniel will

listen to no New Testament warnings of a coming crisis. The very suggestion of such a break of continuity in the course of nature will be met, as St. Peter tells us, by unbelief and scorn.

Let me recall very briefly two of these graphic forecasts. The first is in 2 Tim. iv. It describes Christians who have grown impatient with old and wholesome truth, "piling up" (to use the Apostle's vigorous word) teacher on teacher, who will gratify their morbid imaginations and pander to their credulity with pleasant fictions. We recognise some of these forgeries under modern names. Theosophy (which belies its name), Christian Science (which is neither of Christ nor true Science), Spiritualism (for which St. Paul used a much severer term—1 Tim. iv. 1), and other delusions, the common characteristic of all being the rejection of Christ, sent from God as recorded in the Scriptures, and foretold as coming again to receive His redeemed and to judge the world. No servant of the Lord instructed in the Word can think for a moment of the possibility of reconstruction having the smallest value from a Christianity which is practically denuded of Christ.

Let me take another picture, typical as well as prophetic, of the latter days of the Church on earth. It will be found in the concluding verses of Rev. iii. The letter to the

Church of Laodicea is the last of a series where many devout students have seen the successive features of the period between the First and Second Comings. It is no strained fancy that notes resemblances which are more than coincidences, and sees warnings for the present in the story of the past. The very title claimed by Him Who sends the message is significant. "These things saith the Amen the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." It recalls His name in Messianic prophecy (Isa. lxv. 16, R.V.; 2 Cor. i. 20), and His own constant use of the word. It asserts the absolute veracity of His witness, declares His oneness with God, and insists on the very truths which are distorted or disparaged by many to-day. The character of the Church also resembles much with which we are familiar in our modern Christianity. Its affectation of wealth, whether intellectual or potential, which conceals its fatal ignorance and poverty; its miserable excuse for a cowardly and false moderation, which is torn to shreds by the terrible words of Him Who searches the secrets of all hearts. Yet Christ has still His own in Laodicea who can hear His voice. His call to them is **not for reconstruction, but for repentance.** He will even be the guest and then the host of each faithful servant; and when the conflict, which must come, is won, the Lord will exalt him to more

than angelic honour. So, too, in our present-day Laodicea, all is not dark. There are lamps which have not "gone out." We have much to thank God for in the many witnesses who in various ways are true to Him. Even the awful war has revealed heroes and saints we had not known before; brave sons and devoted daughters of Britain who, for righteousness sake, have stood the terrible strain in the field, on the seas, and at home. We praise God for the example of sorrows nobly borne and sufferings endured without a murmur. These are facts not to be passed over as though they had no place in making for brighter and better days. But when we say this let us make sure that the "better England" for which we long means a nation with better faith in God and His Word, better devotion to Christ for His saving grace, better fruits of the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us and shaping our lives, and not least, a better hope and expectation for the Coming of the Lord. If this be not our betterment, any reconstruction, admirable as it may seem to its designers, must surely, and perhaps more quickly, find the same end as all such human schemes have had in the past. But this does not alter the duty of the Lord's people. Fellow-Christians may decline to see what seems so clear to us. Religious workers may find no place for Advent Testimony. Ministers may leave it out of their sermons

or books, but those who love and look for the Appearing dare not be silent. The world may treat our warnings as it did those of Noah; we must be as fixed in our purpose as he was in his preparation. And there are **reconstructions which we need to watch.** They are many and of many sorts—national and political readjustments; Leagues and Alliances; the rebuilding of commercial interests; the settlement of our Industrial difficulties; Educational developments; and, not least, standards of social morality. All these may be carried out with consummate skill, but with no hope of stability or success if the one vital factor of permanence be left out.

This is the more true in regard to our religious life. Men are talking of reconstructed Churches and a reconstructed Christianity. Some are even offering us a reconstructed Bible. All this is the product of the modern mind, with its new lights and new visions outside, and sometimes far away from, the revelation of God. Apparently these reconstuctors do not dream that all they have contrived may be swept away at any moment as surely as the sand castles of children by a swift-flowing tide. By all means let the Churches reform their constitutions. By all means let Christian work be organized for greater efficiency. By all means, and especially, let schemes for denominational

fellowship be developed. But if even these are to succeed, if they are to endure, it can only be if God's methods and God's aims are kept in the forefront. Christ's Kingdom is not of this world; yea He prays that His disciples, while in the world, may be kept from its evil, its evil ways, and its evil ends. His purpose is to take out of it a consecrated people for Himself, who will share His throne throughout eternity. What reconstruction can have His blessing that neglects His ideals? If there are servants in His household who say, "the Lord delayeth His coming" or even forget that He is coming, this should only increase the responsibility of their fellow-servants for more earnest witness and more constant watching. Let the testimony, both by word and life, of every loyal Christian show that he is ready for his Lord, whether "at even or midnight, at the cock-crowing or in the morning."

Some one is said to have asked John Wesley how he would wish to be found by his coming Lord; whether on his knees in prayer or in some special act of sacred service. The reply was that his only desire was to be always ready, doing whatever was his proper business, in its proper place and time, awake or asleep, at the time when it should please his Lord to come. Such a spirit is the best preparation for ourselves and the best witness to others. May our God grant that these

meetings shall kindle Advent expectations, and give an Advent attitude and Advent Testimony to multitudes far beyond the number of those who have gathered here, and that the heavenly hosts, who have perhaps been nearer to us to-day than we knew, may have a multiplied joy when, with their Lord and ours, they meet His redeemed people in the air and conduct them to the eternal mansions prepared for before the foundation of the world.

Short Address by A. T. SCHOFIELD, Esq., M.D.

It is quite impossible for me, my friends, to address you standing. I am obliged to remain sitting. I want to leave a text in your heart before we separate. We are ahead of time, so there is plenty of time for it. I shall only occupy three or four minutes. Prov. iv., 18: "The path of the just is as the light of the dawn, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We have been in the presence of the Morning Star all this day, and henceforth our powers must be exercised in the light of the dawn. The brightness of the light of our coming Saviour must be reflected upon our faces, as by faith we look into His. The simile is perfect. The light of the Christian does not come from any excellence in himself, but is derived entirely from that at which he looks. And the object before our hearts this day, as, I trust, in a way that it has never been before, is the "Bright and Morning Star," so soon to come.

Never shall I forget, many years ago standing on the top of a high mountain in Switzerland with some hundreds of very ordinary men and women. I looked at their faces; they were dull and heavy, some after sleep having been roused at four o'clock in

the morning to see the sun rise. But when that glorious vision appeared over the mountain-tops those faces were transfigured with the light of the dawn of the coming day. Ah! how beautiful we should be if our faces were ever turned towards the light; how we should witness for our Master if the reflection of the Morning Star could be seen in our eyes! May He bring us, each of us, on our knees before Him, that He may write all the words we have heard in our hearts, and that henceforth we may carry upon our brows the stamp of His blessed Name, where all may see it; for His Name's sake. Amen.

Advent Testimony Addresses.

Thursday Evening, December 13th, 1917.

The Rev. Preb. F. S. WEBSTER, M.A.
(Presiding).

This, beloved friends, is no ordinary service; it is a very solemn testimony meeting. We are all here to declare our sincere and steadfast conviction that the present crisis points to the close of "the times of the Gentiles," and that the unveiling and reappearance of the Lord Jesus Christ may be expected at any moment.

Now, the Gospel, as you know, is good news, and part of the good news—I think I should like to say the best part—for this stricken, sobbing world of ours is the fact that **Jesus Christ is coming again.** The chief fault of Christians to-day is that they do not make enough of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a good deal of preaching, alas! which is not the preaching of Christ, and there is a good deal of preaching of Christ which is good and true as far as it goes, but it does not go quite far enough, for it leaves out the good news of His coming again. It is good and right to preach Christ incarnate, Christ crucified,

Christ risen, Christ ascended, but if we would be true to the Scripture we must add one more note—Christ returning, Christ coming again. That is the testimony which God, we believe, has raised us up, all unworthy as we are, to make to this generation.

Now, my principal desire this evening is to show that this hope of our Lord's return is of real practical value in determining the Christian character needed in these critical days. What are the elements of the Christian character most needed to-day? We shall all agree, I think, that the times are depressing; the outlook is dark. Never had the Lord's people more need of everything that can sustain in them hopefulness and glad restfulness of heart, and there is nothing that will sustain our hope like the assurance that Christ is coming again. That is the hope of the Church. Many of us are praying at this time that by the patience and comfort of God's word we may embrace and ever hold fast our blessed hope. We know that **the Church's blessed hope** is bound up with the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. In the passage read to us just now, from the first chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, there were three marks of the Christians of those days—their faith, their love, their hope. Their faith and love made them work and labour; their hope gave them patience,

enabling them to endure. We specially need hope to-day. We cannot be content to live ordinary lives in these extraordinary days. We all have to be at our very best for God and for His truth. But we cannot be keen if we are discouraged. The energy of life springs from encouragement and is largely made up of hope. Where shall we get our hope? The Christian's hope rests upon the assurance that Jesus Christ is coming again. That was the hope of these Thessalonians. They turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.

Now the danger of the present day—it has been the danger of the Church at all times—is this, that just because the Lord delayeth His coming, because the Bridegroom has tarried now for nearly 1,900 years, people have let slip the blessed hope of His coming again. But we must be hopeful, or we are no good in the world. Nature abhors gloom and despondency. Nature is full of hope, and if men have lost the hope of the Lord's return they have to look in other directions to get their hope sustained and strengthened Before the war, where were men looking, those who wanted to be hopeful? They had their peace conferences for bringing about the brotherhood of the nations. They had great schemes of social improvement; endeavours to substitute co-operation for competition;

grand dreams of allying capital and labour in a strong alliance full of mutual confidence and good will; great hopes they had. They thought that by education, by agitation, by legislation, they would make this world a better world; they would bring upon the earth the paradise for which men yearn. But these hopes have been rudely shattered, for all the forces of our civilisation—our education, our agitation, our legislation, our idealism—were not sufficient to stay the awful catastrophe, the sad tragedy of this cruel war. Now some are trying to pick up heart again, and they are saying, "This is the war which is going to end all war." I do not think it is the function of war to end war. **War generally begets war.** War spreads. There is only one event which will put an end to war; it is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Now don't mistake me. It is quite right to aim at all these good things. I have spoken at peace meetings—before the war, I mean; not since. It is quite right to join in any movement that has good hope of improving the state of this world. But while there are many abuses and wrongs, the greatest of all the wrongs ever committed upon earth is the wrong that was done to our Lord Jesus Christ, and until that wrong is righted, i.e., until Jesus Christ comes back again, and, having received the kingdom, returns to

reign, there will be no paradise upon earth, yes, until Jesus Christ thus comes to His own and receives the throne that is His right. All the golden schemes and visions of well-meaning idealists will fail of their fruition. **Nothing will be really right till Jesus comes again.**

You will all agree that the true Christian can only be defined or described in one way, that is, by terms of personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. A real Christian is one who belongs to Christ; who believes in Him, who loves Him, who lives for Him. Now, one mark of loyalty to Jesus Christ is that we are looking for His return. If we really belong to Him, if we really believe in Him, we shall love His appearing, we shall long for His coming again. When I speak about the Church's hope as that which makes us strong and glad, remember, please, hope always means the combination of desire and expectation. It cannot be a blessed hope in your heart that the Lord is coming again unless you desire His coming.

When I was in Germany, before the war, I had a conversation with a Lutheran sister who has been to Keswick. She told me how on one occasion she was talking to the Kaiser and telling him all about Keswick, and that he listened with great interest. Then she went on to speak about the great hope of the Lord's return, but at once he broke in in his

quick, impulsive way, and said: "That would not do at all; it would upset all my plans!" I think that was an honest utterance. I want to ask you to forget the Kaiser for a moment. Is that what your heart is really saying? I have every sympathy with young people, full of hope and energy, who want to live out their life and carry through all their plans and schemes. When I was in the Church Army, many years ago now, I did not think much about the coming of the Lord. I thought the Church Army was going to regenerate England. I have sympathy with those who want to live their life, but I want to say to you with all my heart, you will live your life to truer purpose and on a higher plane altogether if the Lord comes within the next few years. We ought to long for Christ's return, first, for Christ's sake, that He may come to His own.

"Oh! the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee, my own belovéd Lord!
Every tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
Brought to Thee with one accord.
Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned,
Unto earth's remotest bound,
Glorified, adored, and owned."

Don't you long for it for Christ's sake? Think what a sorrow it must be in the heart

of the Lord Jesus that His own people, the Jewish nation, are still in blindness and unbelief, and will not have Him to reign over them. **Oh! the joy when Israel is brought back!** Those who still cherish unfounded optimistic views, who still believe that the forces of civilisation are going to bring about a paradise, generally forget the Jews. I never came across anybody who believed that the Jewish nation was going to be converted as a nation in any other way than by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. So for His sake, and for this sorrowing world's sake, we ought with all our hearts to long for the return of the King.

One thing more. However much we long for our Lord's return, we cannot be full of hope about it unless we have good reason for believing that it is going to take place soon. The real living hope of the Church is the return of our Lord in this generation. Many of you rememeber what an impulse it gave to missionary activity when the Student Movement took as its motto the words, **"The evangelisation of the world in this generation."** It made the enterprise come home to us and made us feel the responsibility of it. So nothing would do more to stimulate hope and holiness of life and to call forth earnest, self-sacrificing service than that we should be able to clasp to our hearts the blessed hope that Christ is coming back again in this genera-

tion. It is this that has made us give our testimony. We may be wrong, but I think we are right. Though in other ages there have been signs which seemed to signify the speedy return of the Lord, we believe the signs have never been so abundant and so clear as they are in the present day. A few weeks ago I opened the "Times" newspaper, and I saw in the very centre of the paper a paragraph headed "Palestine and the Jews." It was a letter from Mr. Balfour to Lord Rothschild in reply to a petition sent by a large number of Zionist bodies and other Jewish societies, requesting the Government to help forward the fulfilment of their Zionist aspirations. Mr. Balfour in his letter declared that the Cabinet had decided to use all their endeavours to make Palestine the home of the Jewish nation. We have learnt—it is keeping our hearts singing with praise and glad with expectation—we know the British flag is flying over Jerusalem to-day. What does it mean? In all soberness, in the presence of God, desiring to weigh every syllable I utter, I say I have never seen anything to give me more warrant to believe that the advent of Jesus Christ is coming very soon. That is the burden of our testimony. "Let your loins be girt and your lamps burning, and be ye yourselves like unto men that wait—for what? For the end of the war? May God send it. For better social legislation? May

God give us grace to devise it. For the reunion of Christendom—at any rate, Evangelical Christendom? God help us to bring it about. But this is not what we wait for. We may work for these things, we may give what strength and energy we have in pushing forward everything that is for the betterment of the Church and of the nation, but "be ye yourselves like unto men waiting for their Lord when He shall return from the wedding." That will make you steadfast. There is an old hymn I used to sing when a boy—I loved it because it had such a rollicking tune—but I never realised until perhaps twenty or thirty years ago—and I was not a boy then—what it really meant. It is full of the Advent Hope, and when you get a grip of it, or when it gets a grip of you, it will put backbone and hope and gladness into you. This is the chorus:—

"'Hold the fort, for I am coming!'
Jesus signals still.
'Wave the answer back to heaven,'
'By Thy grace we will.'"

Let men say what they like about the Bible. Let men doubt it if they please, and scoff at us who believe it for being fanatics. Christ said He is coming again, and we will hold the fort till He comes. Nothing helps us more to be true and steadfast than the glad expectation of our Lord's return in this generation.

Address by Rev. DINSDALE T. YOUNG, M.A.

Prebendary Webster and my dear friends,—I have half an hour to speak in, and we are five minutes after the time. I will try and gird myself to my share in this important and happy task. I regard this meeting as a Revival meeting, and I feel thoroughly at home in it; and I should like to-night, as far as this great subject is concerned, to do the work of an evangelist. As Martin Luther would have said, I won't preach to the doctors of divinity, but I will rather talk to the multitude.

Now I want to say this, first of all—that I might draw a very cogent argument and a very sanctifying argument in behalf of this great subject, the Return of the King, from the character of the men who have held the belief. When I go back to the days of the Early Church I find that the very flower of that Church held this faith. The great martyrs, the men of keenest spiritual vision, the men who saved souls with most wonderful skill, the outstanding men of the Early Church, were largely nerved to what they were and to what they did because they were looking for the Lord. They said, in effect, "He may come at any time." Our Lord has delayed His coming, but we are here to-night still looking for the Lord, and watching and

praying for His return. We hold the faith of the finest elements of the Early Church.

Then when you come to Puritan days—it is not fashionable nowadays to quote the Puritans, but whether it is fashionable or not, let it be done on every possible opportunity, for they were real men—when you come to Puritan days, what said Thomas Goodwin? and was there ever a greater intellect? Some of us would run the risk of being called fanatics by saying that he was in some respects the most wonderful mind that has ever been devoted to the Epistles of St. Paul. That man of colossal learning, that man who burned with the fire of the Holy Ghost—what did he say in his quaint style? He said, "The Lord Jesus will stay no longer than suffices Him to get your business done for you." That was Thomas Goodwin. What does Richard Baxter say in "The Saints' Rest"? Would that we all knew that book and came under its spell more often. Richard Baxter asks this quaint question—I give you almost, I think, with exactitude his terms—"Has the Bridegroom left us on a divorce? No; He will come back to us again." You know what a seraphic soul Richard Baxter was. Then, coming to later times, John Wesley held this faith. I wish all his sons and daughters did. John Wesley believed in the personal return of the Lord, and he lived and died, aye, and laboured with unquench-

able fervour under the inspiration of the blessed hope. Come to later times still. I owe more than I can ever tell you, dear people, to that wonderful school of Scotland, the Bonar school. I do not think a week ever passes that I do not get fresh spiritual teaching from Andrew and Horatius Bonar. What was it that, next to the doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice of our Lord, made the Bonar brothers the saints, the apostles that they were? It was the blessed hope. They were always looking for the Lord; they said, "The King may come at any moment; when He comes, O may He find us being sanctified and gathering a people prepared for the Lord." They laboured on, and when eighty years of age Andrew Bonar hoped it might please the Lord to let him live to see the King come back. Then he said, "It does not seem to be the Lord's will," and he went to meet the King, where he is now. That school, of Scotland, has been a wonderful school. They received their potency largely by this doctrine.

What sort of men does it make? Going back a few years before the Bonars, in Scotland, I ask, What about Dr. Chalmers? Increasingly, as the years of his life passed, he held to the personal return of our Lord. One day, when in his lecture-room, the bell went before he was quite done, and he brought his hand down with a bang on the table, and

said, "Depend upon it, the Millennium will come in one of these days with a hammer-smash!" Come to later years still. What about D. L. Moody? Did not that princely evangelist testify, not once or twice, that he had found the fires of his soul-saving ardour raised to white-heat by the conception of the New Testament doctrine of the revelation of our Lord as imminent, the personal, literal, visible return of the King, that great doctrine that, I venture to say, pervades the Old Testament, and burns like a pillar of fire through the New? Take one other instance. Can some of us ever say what we owe to Spurgeon? Charles Haddon Spurgeon received a new anointing—I do not think it is too strong a statement—by perceiving this truth of the personal return of the Lord more vividly in his later years. And you will all get a new anointing if you will receive it. I do not hesitate to say that it has been life from the dead to me and to my ministry in late years, because I have realised that the Lord is coming, and that I must preach under the conviction that He might come before my sermon is ended. At any moment He might flash in. "That blessed hope." I do not stay longer to develop it. You have got a consummate argument for the blessedness of the Advent cry that we are raising here to-day from the splendid character of

the noble men who have been inspired by that belief.

Well, but you may say, "These men are gone, and you are an inefficient order in these days!" Granted. But what does it do now? Supposing there were young men and women here to-night, say, unconverted, or converted, but unsanctified; supposing there were people here to-night—it is conceivable—who were inquirers on this great question. "Well, now," you say, "what is the fruitage of this thing? We have been hearing all the day about the imminence of the personal return of our Lord. What sort of Christians does that faith make?" With the instincts of an old-fashioned preacher I want to take three points, if the time will allow.

I want to say, first of all, that this belief ensures a noble type of doctrine on the part of those who hold it. I am not going to insult you, or my Lord, by suggesting that it does not matter what we believe. We are not going to spend one moment on that ridiculous notion. No; we believe in *believing*. We have heard a great deal in late years, too nauseating, about "honest doubt." Let us hear a little more about honest faith—it is high time—in the pulpits everywhere. What are the great characteristics of those who hold this faith? I am going to show in a moment or two, in a very elementary way, what effect this looking for the Lord has on

doctrine. Then we shall know what kind of preachers we are likely to have that hold this faith, or Sunday school teachers, or private Christians. You will always find that those who hold the faith of the personal return of the Lord are great believers in their Bible. I never knew a man yet who was what some call themselves, a modern thinker about the Bible, who was greatly enamoured of our Lord's return. I should not like the Lord to come and find me a critic of the Bible. I think that would be a desperately uncomfortable situation in which to be found at the Second Advent. "What are you doing?" "Tearing Thy Book to bits, Lord, in the name of moden scholarship!" I should not like to think that is the attitude of any of us. It cannot be if you believe in the Lord's return. You may think it a curious thing to say, but I venture to say it is valid experimentally—that if you want to revive the old-fashioned, strong, deep, repentant faith in the Inspiration of the Scriptures, then get a revived belief in the personal return of the Lord. It is inconceivable that a man who believes in the Lord's return should not be a great Bible man. I never heard of one of these men who was not a great Bible man. How illogical it would be! Where have we gotten this doctrine? From the Bible. It is not an inference of our own; it is not a philosophical deduction of our own. We have got

it out of the Book. Is the Lord coming back? The Book says so. Mind you this, young people, there is more said on this question in the New Testament than on any other subject. You say, "That is strong!" I know it is. All truth is strong. But it is true. More than even the Atoning Sacrifice is the return of the Lord alluded to in the New Testament. A man who has got a revelation from the Book is sure to prize the Book. Look over Christian biography, and you will find that it is Second Adventists who have been great lovers of the Bible. Nothing engenders less delight in the Word than not looking for the Lord's return. If I believe in that doctrine the Bible will not be to me a precarious Book; it will be the sure Word of God. There will be a great deal in it that my poor brain cannot understand. I saw a man the other day who told me he had made up his mind that he would not believe anything in future in religion that he could not understand. I said, "You will have a very compact creed, my friend." The Bible is full of mystery, and so is nature, and so are you. There is mystery everywhere. But that Book is the sure Word of God to the man who is looking for his Lord. I commend that to you. This doctrine of the Lord's personal return is an inspiration to faith in the Divinity of Scripture. The Bible is very dear to those who love their Lord.

I want to tell you another theological characteristic that this faith evokes. Looking for the Lord's personal return always gives people a great view of Jesus. *Christology* is a favourite word nowadays They have a splendid Christology who are looking for their Lord. They do not merely believe in the Christ of history. They do not know Christ "after the flesh." It takes some courage, perhaps, nowadays to say that, because I fear that the Christ believed on in many of the churches is simply a Christ "after the flesh," and nothing more. We believe in the Christ of glory. It is not what He used to be on earth. All that is very beautiful. But the blessed thing is that now He is alive—as much alive as anybody in this hall; literally alive. Divine? Yes. I never knew anybody who believed in the Lord's return who hesitated about the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ. This faith cannot live in any form of Unitarianism. He is my Lord and my God, and I am looking for Him. If I say He is coming as He went—and He may come to-night—it is God manifest in the flesh that we are looking for. Keep your hold on the Divine Lord—not the Christ who was "mistaken" in things; not the Christ who only "looked from the philosophical and scientific levels of His age," but the Christ "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." That is the Christ in whom

faith is engendered by belief in the doctrine of His personal return.

Another thing. What a great doctrine the Atoning Sacrifice is for them who believe in the Lord's return! I was very much impressed, as our friend read just now, with the way the Atoning Sacrifice is, so to say, hitched on, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, as it constantly is in the New Testament, with the Second Advent. Is He coming again? Yes; the Thessalonian Christians were told so. What is the secret of realising that? Listen! "If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again." You will not believe in the Lord's return if you do not believe that Jesus died and rose again. If you do believe in His return every day He will be dearer to you. He died not simply as a martyr, but as the "propitiation for the sins of the world." He will get to be more than that. You will say, "He died for *me*." That is saving faith; the great act of appropriation that takes that precious death home to my guilt and my sin, and says, "He answered for *me*." The Atoning Sacrifice—that is the faith, the whole confidence of all those who are looking for their Lord. I do not know anything more needed in the Church to-day—in the pulpits to begin with, and in the pews after the pulpits—than a more emphatic believing, a more resounding proclamation of the Atoning Sacrifice and of

the finished work of Christ on the Tree. Brothers and sisters, we have not a scintilla of hope in anything else. If Jesus did not die for our sins we are damned. That is old theology, but it is true theology. I commend the doctrine of the Lord's return because it fosters such a type of faith. Think that out, and the more you think it out the more you will be blessed in your inmost soul.

I want to say a second thing, and it is this: That the doctrine of the Lord's return, perceived, believed, realised—looking for the Lord's return at any moment—produces a beautiful type of character. The great want of the age in all the Churches is *saints*; saints not simply in the ecclesiastical, conventional sense, but in the Scriptural sense; holy people, but not holy people in the grim idea of holiness. Some people think that if a man is unusually solemn he is specially holy. That is not at all so. His solemnity far oftener comes from indigestion than from sanctification. You must never associate holiness with the capricious idea that a man is getting holier because he is more sour. **Holiness is likeness to Jesus.** When you have read all your books on holiness—and you cannot read too many, especially Evangelical books—you have to come back to this: "Everyone, when he is perfected, shall be as his Master." That is it—likeness to Jesus. In my experience and in my reading of the

men and women who have held this blessed belief, it has been one of the main factors in their entire sanctification. Who are the Christians in the Churches that walk most closely with God; who are possessed manifestly of the mystic secret; who are those that know Jesus and of whom people take knowledge that they have been with Jesus? I venture to say they are people who have gripped most strongly the hope of the Lord's return. It is a sanctifying hope. I have no doubt that if this meeting were turned into an Experience meeting you would have people leaping up all over the hall and telling you what it would be good to hear. A Testimony meeting, with this as its grand ideal, would be an immense blessing. They would tell you this —that as soon as they realised that not death, but the Lord's return, is our great hope, it has had such a hallowing influence on them. The love of money cannot canker in anybody that is looking for the Lord.

I will tell you a thing that looking for the Lord casts out—*jealousy*. It is one of the besetting sins of Christian people, and even of Christian ministers. A brother here says "Specially." I won't stay to argue, because I may lose a minute or two of my time. It is an awful sin; one of the most fiendish sins you can conceive of. It is being sad at other people's happiness. It is a deplorable thing. What jealousy there is amongst Christian

people. You cannot bear the mere mention of the names of some people without feeling jealousy in your heart. That abominable spirit will go if you believe that the Lord may come at any time.

Belief in the Lord's return makes earnest people. What power there is in preaching when preaching is inspired by the conviction of the Lord's return; what power there is in teaching, what power there is in private conversation; what a force there is about the quiet, living word of the man who speaks under this spell! Before the sentence is complete my Lord may be here. This is not fanaticism. You have the answer to this truth in your own experience, many of you. Beautiful souls are fashioned by this great truth.

One other question, and I am done. What kind of Christian service does this blessed faith produce? Evangelistic service—let us use a homelier word—**soul-converting service.** Did you ever know a man who had gripped this particular truth who was not evangelistic in spirit? Did you notice in the lesson that was read just now that obviously Paul had preached the doctrine of the Lord's return as a converting power, for he says they "had turned from idols in order to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." That had been one of the inducements to men being converted. You

do not often in a mission hear that applied as a reason—"Give yourselves to God that you may wait for His Son from heaven." It was a great evangelistic force in Apostolic days, and it is a converting force to-day. The more this grips you, brethren, the more you will preach for men's conversion. How we want soul-converting sermons in all the Churches! Away with the pulpit essay; away with the discussion of present-day topics; away with all these petty little themes! The great question is salvation, pardon, renewal, sanctification, whether people preach in the pulpit, or preach in the Sunday school, or write in a newspaper, or write books, or whatever they do—the salvation of men, gathering a people prepared for the Lord. What evangelistic work there is where this doctrine is believed! That is what we want in the Churches. That is one reason that I am on this platform to-night. This faith fosters evangelization. If I preach under this inspiration I won't leave my appeal to sinners till the end of the sermon. I will say, "The Lord may come before you are half through, man!" Get it in at the beginning and punctuate the sermon with it. What a different atmosphere it would bring to many of our Churches! O! that this doctrine may spread, for it warms the atmosphere. When a man is possessed of this doctrine he does not mumble; you can

hear what he says; he has got good news to tell, as the Prebendary said just now. When a man tells you good news he does not mumble it; he shouts it out. I believe with all my soul that this blessed hope fosters that type of character, that type of faith, that type of service. So I want us to-night, those who are not Christ's, to give ourselves to the Lord. Now you begin to wait for His Son from heaven, wherever you are sitting. Perhaps somebody is a backslider. A quaint old brother whom I knew in the North of England said, "Some of you are backsliders; some of you have never been foresliders!" Turn to the Saviour to-night. Go away and say, "I gave myself to Jesus by an act of simple faith; I cast myself on the finished work of Christ at that Second Advent meeting." For our doctrine to-night is one of the precious inducements to give yourselves to the Lord. Then, you good Christian people, go away thinking about this, praying about this, and reading about this, and be like that splendid man of Boston, Dr. A. G. Gordon. His "Ecce Venit" is one of the most blessed books I have ever read on the coming of the Lord. His biographer says there never was a day in Dr. Gordon's life when he was not preparing for his Lord's return. Almighty God, baptise us all with that baptism.

Address by the Rev. J. STUART HOLDEN, D.D.

I think there will be unanimity of agreement that those who were responsible, under the guidance, as we believe, of God's Spirit, for drawing up the seven statements which form the subject of our consideration and testimony to-day, were indeed led of that same Spirit, not only in regard to the substance of them, but the order also in which they have been set forth. It is my privilege and responsibility at the close of this great day of Christian fellowship to speak to you on the seventh and last of them, and I propose to limit myself entirely to the terms of my commission: "**That the truths embodied in this statement are of the utmost practical value in determining Christian character and action with reference to the pressing problems of the hour.**"

It is altogether fitting that the closing word in these gatherings should be spoken on this theme, because the truths to which testimony has been made to-day are to a large extent rejected by great numbers of Christians, on the ground that they have no practical bearing upon Christian life; that they impose no ethical imperative upon those who hold them; that they create no strong controlling motive; and that they convey no sufficient inspiration

to self-sacrifice, to service, to the spending of life to the utmost in those great causes unto which Christ has committed His people. It is within common knowledge, indeed, that since the publication of this Manifesto these objections have been strongly declared both in pulpit and press. And I believe it is by Divine arrangement that all we have heard to-day from the lips of God's honoured servants—who have voiced no mere conception of their minds in regard to these things, but their indubitable experience of the sanctifying efficacy they convey—should focus upon this consideration.

What does the truth of the Lord's Coming mean to the life of the man who holds it? What difference does it make to his character and conduct? My friend (Mr. Dinsdale Young) who has just spoken, has, in his own glowing way, given to us his personal testimony on this point, and has summoned notable witnesses from out the past to its confirmation. And for us now, in this closing hour, this is the altogether supreme and urgent question: "Do I believe that the Lord Jesus is coming again? Do I believe that His coming has a dual significance to His people and to the world? Do I believe that His coming will usher in an entirely new era, and will be the first in a new series of tremendous events? Do I believe that He may come at any moment and break in upon the task

which immediately engages my powers and interests? And what difference does my believing so make in my life?

Now let me say at once that I am in entire agreement with those who contend that the value of any aspect of God's truth is in direct proportion to its power of influencing conduct. The truth of every theological contention is proved by its religious products. The pragmatists are right; and, indeed, we all belong to their order, at any rate, in this sense—that we discard as an interpretation of the truth of God that which makes men and women mere star-gazers; that we have no sympathy with, and certainly no interest in commending, any ministry of the Word of God which is not creative of spiritual energy and zeal, and does not inspire to the closest possible following of the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ. For in the Divine Word we find that the work of faith and the patience of hope are intimately, and, indeed, inextricably, bound up with the labour of love. And the statement to which I have been asked to speak, declares that this great Truth is of practical value, because it creates motive and inspiration, for personal application to the solution of the pressing problems of to-day.

Now let us first see what are **the pressing problems of to-day.** And I take it we are all agreed that there are problems clamouring

for immediate attention, and others looming in the near future which are well-nigh insoluble on every other hypothesis than that to which we humbly bear testimony to-day. There are problems confronting the Nation, and others more directly confronting the Christian Church, which are more momentous in their alternative issues than any that past ages have ever held. And let me just say, in passing, lest there should be any misconception on a matter of greatest importance, that belief in the Coming of the Lord by no means exempts Christian men from the responsibilities of nationality. I will not elaborate this statement, but I am convinced it expresses a situation which we must as Christians frankly acknowledge as being altogether in harmony with the Divine Word. Now what are the problems of to-day? Firstly, let me say what they are not. The really urgent problems of to-day are not those which concern the predominance of our military forces over those of our foes, important as that matter is at the present hour. They are not those concerning the financial recovery of the Nation after this time of such great strain. Nor are they connected with the economic and commercial reconstruction which will have to be undertaken, and which will challenge every material and moral resource we have. They have not to do with the reconciling of conflicting elements within

our national life, nor yet with the re-creation of ruptured international relationships. These are all, of course, problems in which we are profoundly interested. But they are by no means the most vital for us as believers. Our really pressing problems are in the moral and spiritual realm of things. For *there* are to be found the immediate causes of much of the present disorder. And in the light of the revealed Will of God for the lives of men, and in the light also of the eternal issues of human attitude toward that Will, I affirm unhesitatingly that the real problems of the present and future are mostly spiritual.

Essential Spiritual Problems.

What are they? Let me suggest some of them, at least. How to awaken a worldly and slumber-bound Church; how to arrest the attention of an absorbed and indifferent world; how to procure a hearing for the Evangel of Jesus Christ; how to secure the application of His law to the common affairs of the lives of His people; how to overtake the results of long years of inertia in the Christian Church, and that despite its endowments and its commission; how to fulfil, in short—and this is where these pressing problems focus in our personal responsibility—how to fulfil to the utmost all that Christ meant in His injunction, "Ye shall be witnesses to Me unto the uttermost parts of the earth." I

believe with all my heart that these are the most essential and important of all the problems which are before us now.

How are they to be met? Let us be entirely frank with one another and with the world. These problems will be solved, not by statesmanship, not by any League of Nations, not by any multiplied organization. They will be met by men whose lives are made holy, and whose service is empowered by the indwelling Holy Ghost; men who are themselves an incarnation of the Truth they profess, who shine as lights in a dark world, and who, because of the claim which the Blood of the Lord Christ makes upon them, cannot keep away from the haunts of sin, the abodes of cruelty, the habitations of evil and human need. These problems are going to be met by men in whose hearts there burns that great Evangelical passion of which we have heard to-night. I affirm what my friend has so splendidly declared to us—that that passion is generated more continually and completely and certainly by a belief in the near Coming of the Lord than by any other aspect of His revealed truth.

If these are the pressing problems, if these challenge the faith of the Church of Christ to-day and to-morrow, let me say another thing in reference to them. There is no adequate inspiration for the carrying-out of our personal responsibilities in regard to

these things, in that conception of the Divine order which has been repeatedly referred to to-day, only to be controverted, which is current in all the Churches—that somehow, by the ministry of the Church and the Gospel, the world is to become better and better, making continual progress toward the light, until all its Governments and civilisations are ultimately captured by the spirit of Christ, and we have an ideally human fellowship which is called the Kingdom of God. **That is what is almost universally preached to-day.** That is—my brethren in the ministry will bear me out in this—what all our young students are taught. I do not know a single theological college in this country where students are ever taught one thing about the Coming of the Lord except it be in derision of the views advocated here to-day. That is the conception of things that commonly obtains, and I declare myself utterly at a loss to know how intelligent men can hold to it, especially since August, 1914. I cannot for the life of me understand how they can be so completely obsessed by a delusive optimism which has been contradicted and discredited by all that has come upon the world as the result of human philosophy and Christless civilisation. But even though their conception were true, it conveys no inspiration—none whatever! For what inherent encouragement can there be in working at a

task which you know cannot possibly be accomplished in your lifetime? What inspiration can there be in working at something which you know is never going to be realised? On the other hand, if we are right —God grant we are—that the work of His Church in this dispensation is not the conversion of the world, but the bearing of a witness to which His Spirit sets the seal by laying hold of God-marked souls and uniting them by faith to the Lord Jesus—if that be the work of the Church in this dispensation, to call out from the world a people unto the Name of the Lord, what an inspiration have we to serve! Why, the very soul to whom you may next speak of Him may complete the Body, and so bring back the Head! There is unfailing inspiration there.

The Missionary's Hope.

It falls to my share in life to have something to do, as some of you know, with Missionaries and Missionary Administration. I will not go so far back as my friend Mr. Young has gone for his witnesses. For I can summon witnesses by the score, yea, by the hundred, from the mission fields of the world to-day. And in their name I declare to-night that what keeps them at hard and often unremunerative toil in African jungles, in crowded Chinese cities, by the warm South Seas, and in Arctic snows, is not the hope

of converting Africa, or China, or Fiji, or Lapland. It is the hope of winning from these nations members of the living Body of Jesus Christ, and of thus hastening His Return. I personally do not know a missionary who is inspired by this thought—"I must do my little quota at an impossible task—at any rate, impossible of realisation in this age—and then die." I do not know a single missionary who is reinforced and encouraged by any such consideration. But, I thank God, I know hundreds who are working nobly, pouring out their lives in noble heroism and sacrificial service, empowered by what they find in the immediate looking for and hasting unto the Coming of the Lord. Therefore I say that we are justified in presenting this to you and in pressing it upon your earnest attention in these closing minutes—that these truths to which testimony has been borne are of the utmost value in affording, not only substantial support for human life, but impulse also in the direction of the solution of to-day's pressing problems.

When we turn to the New Testament, it is to find that without exception every Apostolic writer bases his exhortation to holiness, unworldliness, true discipleship, upon **the fact that Christ is coming again.** It is as though they did not find adequate motive of sufficient inspiration either in the Christ of history or in the Christ presently at the right hand of

God. Though, it need not be said, they never belittle these aspects of His life. There are three key-words to the Epistles of the New Testament — Atonement, Advocacy, Advent. And I say again, it is as though their writers did not find their sustaining and ultimate inspiration either in the Atonement or in the continuous Advocacy and intercession of the great High Priest, but only in these as completed by the certainty of His return. And so they make this the basis, and set it forward as the justification of their ethical and spiritual appeal: "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking!" "living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, looking!" "Everyone that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure!" And when the life of holiness brings you into conflict with the powers that oppose all that is Christlike in the world, "Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry!" "Stablish your hearts, be patient; the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh!" I say again, you cannot find any exhortation to holiness, to self-sacrifice, to identification with the Lord Jesus in His death and life,

that is not based upon the great and glorious fact to which we humbly bear our witness to-day—that the Lord is coming.

If these things be so, if these problems which have to be faced demand that Christian life be lived on a higher level of devotion and a deeper level of self-forgetfulness, then let us pause before this great assembly breaks up, and let this lay hold upon us as with a new grip of God upon our souls: "The Lord is at hand." How, then, does my life compare with the Standard? How, then, does my service measure up with the Pattern? I remember some few years ago a lady came to invite me to speak at some gathering. I had to say to her, after consulting my engagement-book, "I'm exceedingly sorry; I've not got a single free date for six months." I think, perhaps, she was a little upset with me for refusing her invitation. At any rate, she said, "You evidently don't believe in the Lord's Coming; I'm disappointed in you!" I said, "My dear lady, it is just because I do believe in the Lord's Coming that my engagement-book is full. When He comes, I want Him to see that I have been trying to occupy, as He told me, until He comes. I do not want Him to find me a slothful servant. He may come to-day, and, if so, these engagements will never need to be kept. But when He does come, I want Him to find His servant at least seeking to carry out His instruc-

tions." How deep and full is the inspiration and joy of knowing that He might even come ere this meeting breaks up, that He might be here to-night! How would He find us in respect of our service?

I think the thing that has moved me most profoundly in these gatherings to-day is one sentence that fell from Dr. Campbell Morgan this morning, to the effect that "Divine determination may be influenced by the fluctuations of human attitude toward it," which meant to me, at any rate, that that time and season which the Father hath kept in His own power may be in some degree hastened, or hindered, by my attitude of faithfulness or faithlessness. If this be so, then what are you doing? Living selfishly? Earthbound? Careful of the tiny trifles and petty things that fill life so full, and yet leave it so empty? Devoted to those things which demand so much, and leave so little that is worthy? Or are you girding your loins, and trimming your lamps, and living as close to human need and sin and sorrow as Jesus Himself would live, were He here to-night? That is the practical application of all this glorious, heart-elevating testimony to His Advent. The Early Christians used to say to one another when they met and when they parted, **"Maran atha"—the Lord cometh.** In that phrase they read not only encouragement, but enduement. Oh! that it might

more often be on our lips and in our hearts! That is my closing word to you to-night. We shall almost certainly never meet again, this great concourse of people, until we meet "in the air," until Jesus comes. Meanwhile, let us stablish our hearts. Let our lives be afresh endued with Power from on High day by day. Let us live out our lives, to their very last dregs of time and strength, for Christ our Master. Maran atha!

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